



NH Department of Health & Human Services
Division for Children, Youth & Families

DCYF Standard Operating Procedure

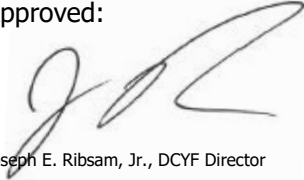
1338.1 CONDUCTING DISPOSITIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Policy Directive: **22-69**

Approved:

Effective Date: **January 2023**

Implements Policy: **1338**


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This SOP defines how JPPOs conduct thorough and meaningful Dispositional Assessments.

Procedure

The following information is to support the implementation of the above referenced policy. This document shall not preclude staff from using their professional judgement based on individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the policy.

- I. The JPPO interviews the child and each parent/legal guardian to discuss and gather information regarding:
 - A. The child's offense(s);
 - B. A potential plan for supervision; and
 - C. The family, including:
 1. Family relationships, resources, strengths, and supports;
 2. Marital/custodial history;
 3. Health issues, including mental health and substance abuse, of the child and of other household members as it may impact the child;
 4. Criminal and other legal history, including information regarding domestic violence, domestic disturbances, gang involvement, child abuse, or child neglect;
 5. Educational history;
 6. Employment history;
 7. Community connections;
 8. Potential safety concerns (weapons, aggressive animals, or other persons in the home); and
 9. Any additional information necessary to complete the Comprehensive CANS assessment.

- II. The JPPO observes the child's living conditions, including the neighborhood they reside in.
 - A. If the initial interview occurs at the office, the JPPO makes a separate home visit for this purpose.
- III. The JPPO should also inquire as to the child's extracurricular activities outside the school setting, such as:
 - A. Hobbies and special interests;
 - B. Recreational activities;
 - C. Friends and regular contacts;
 - D. Memberships (e.g., clubs, scouts);
 - E. Individual and team sports (e.g., Little League); and
 - F. Community service or other volunteer activities.
- IV. The JPPO reviews the DCYF electronic information system for prior DCYF involvement (both JJS and CPS).
 - A. This includes identifying any prior placement or SYSC history; and
 - B. Obtaining input from current or previously assigned DCYF staff (as available).
- V. The JPPO contacts any law enforcement agency the child is known to have been involved with, and the law enforcement agency that filed the petition(s) (if different), to inquire about any current and previous involvement with the youth, or other household members when relevant.
 - A. Information requested should include:
 - 1. Prior police contact, including diversion program referrals and other non-judicial dispositions; and
 - 2. Any arrests or reported domestic disturbances concerning immediate family and household members.
- VI. The JPPO contacts the child's current school (or last school attended as appropriate) to gather information.
 - A. The JPPO may obtain pertinent information about the child from teachers, guidance counselors, special education coordinators, and school administrators.
 - B. Requested information should include:
 - 1. Schools attended by the child;

2. Academic progress and history of the child, including current and previous grades, results of standardized achievement testing, and whether the child has repeated or skipped any subjects or classes;
 3. Results of any special education testing or services provided (IEP or 504 Plan), either presently or previously;
 4. The child's attendance records, including patterns of excused or unexcused absences;
 5. Any conduct issues or behavioral infractions, behavioral assessments, or disciplinary actions (e.g., detention, suspension, expulsion);
 6. The child's participation in school-affiliated individual or team extracurricular activities (e.g., academic competitions, clubs, drama, music, sports, student government, etc.);
 7. Awards and accomplishments achieved by the child; and
 8. Educational goals for the child.
- VII. The JPPO gathers information from the child's medical provider(s), including obtaining and reviewing pertinent medical records (as applicable).
- A. If the child was recently evaluated or treated for health-related concerns, the JPPO seeks input from the attending practitioner.
- VIII. The JPPO reviews the child's records relevant to substance use (i.e., alcohol, drugs, or nicotine products) as applicable.
- A. If the child was recently evaluated or treated for substance use-related concerns, the JPPO should seek input from the attending practitioner (physician, therapist, LADC, etc.).
- IX. The JPPO seeks information as to any mental health-related concerns the child may have, including input from the attending practitioner (physician, therapist, LADC, etc.).
- X. The JPPO gathers information from the victim(s) (if identified) as appropriate for the purpose of ensuring their voice is heard when reporting to the Court.
- A. Prior to making contact with the victim(s), the JPPO consults with the prosecutor as to the best method of gathering information from the victim(s).
 - B. The JPPO may need to gather information regarding any injuries or losses sustained by the victim(s) resulting from the offense and whether restitution is being sought or is appropriate.
- XI. JPPOs complete a Comprehensive CANS assessment in accordance with policy [1560 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\)](#).

XII. JPPOs use information gathered from the interviews with the child and family, as well as the identified needs and actionable items from the Comprehensive CANS to complete the Dispositional Assessment Report (see SOP 1338.2 Writing Dispositional Assessment Reports).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Are Dispositional Assessment Reports required on all cases?

A No. Dispositional Assessment Reports are only conducted when they are specifically ordered by the Court.

Q2. Do I need to complete a Comprehensive CANS if one was completed as part of a Comprehensive Assessment for Treatment (CAT)?

A Yes. If a Comprehensive CANS was completed as part of a CAT to determine placement in a residential treatment program, that information can be used to supplement the Dispositional Assessment, but it cannot be used in lieu of a Comprehensive CANS completed by the JPPO.

Q3. What do I do when there is a missing parent?

A Document your efforts to gather information in the Dispositional Assessment Report, as well as in the DCYF electronic information system.

Q4. What do I do if the child or a parent/guardian is not willing to work with me?

A Discuss the matter with your Supervisor in case further court action is needed.

Q5. Do I need a release to obtain the child’s educational, medical, mental health, or substance abuse records?

- A** Yes, you will need to obtain a release from the parent/guardian.
- A** Providers often have their own releases that will need to be obtained directly from them and then signed by the parent/guardian as appropriate.
- A** Some providers also require the child’s permission, in which case a release will need to be signed by them.

Applicable Forms

Form	Title
1338	Dispositional Assessment Report

Glossary and Document Specific Definitions

[A - B](#) [C - D](#) [E - F](#) [G - I](#) [J - L](#) [M - N](#) [O - Q](#) [R - S](#) [T - V](#) [W - Z](#)

Document Change Log

PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date