

Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services Delinquency and Court Services Division  <b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE</b>	Date Issued: <b>06/10/2013</b>	Reviewed: <b>01/13/2015</b>  Last Revision: <b>01/14/2015</b>	Section: <b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	Policy No: <b>019</b>	Pages: <b>1 of 5</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delinquency and Court Services Division <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children's Court Services Network <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purchase of Service Agencies	Effective Date: <b>01/15/2015</b>	Subject:  <b>Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)</b>			

## I. POLICY

It is the policy of Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD) that the division will implement the use of an evidence-based screening and assessment instrument. The first, and foundational principle of evidence based practices (EBP) is to use an actuarial risk and needs assessment instrument. Such a tool, if implemented with fidelity, provides many benefits, including a consistent unit of measurement from which to study the efficacy of subsequent casework, programming oversight, a common language to enhance communication, and streamlined information gathering with the use of the same tool and reports, etc. DCSD will utilize the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) to assess youth referred to the juvenile justice system for case planning, dispositional recommendations, and service and programs referrals.

## II. PROCEDURE

### A. What is a YASI Assessment?

Delinquency Court Services Division utilizes the Youth Assessment & Screening Instrument (YASI) which is a "structured instrument" that looks to identify both the static (unchangeable characteristics) and the dynamic (changeable characteristics) risk factors of youth in order to help Human Service Worker (HSW) professionals manage their caseloads and to better structure and target services to those youth with higher needs.

The YASI assesses 10 domains: legal history, family, school, community/peers, alcohol/drugs, mental health, violence/aggression, attitudes, skills, and use of free time/employment. The static and dynamic risk factors assessed in YASI are supported by many years of accumulated research on the predictors of delinquent behavior and is an instrument specially designed for youth. The YASI instrument contains highly relevant assessment content and profiles the factors that are critical to promoting positive outcomes for troubled youth. The YASI also includes a brief "Pre-Screen" version (32 items) used to assist in early decision-making and in assigning case resources.

YASI identifies overall levels of risk to re-offend, as well as a youth's criminogenic needs. Addressing these needs has been shown through research to reduce their risk of re-offending. The YASI also provides a mechanism for triaging youth, when first presented to the court, to determine what level of intervention, if any, fits the youth's risk to re-offend. This triage allows us to provide needed services only to those that are most at risk to re-offend. In addition, the most appropriate level of service delivery is identified for the youth (e.g. diversion, intervention, supervision, Wraparound or out of home placement).

## **B. Use of the YASI**

The YASI is a tool used with one's interviewing skills to extract information from the youth through a series of questions. It is structured to help initiate discussions with the youth about relevant areas to help assess both static (unchangeable characteristics) and dynamic (changeable characteristics) risk factors.

While the tool looks to provide guidance it is not intended to be rigid in design where the HSW would just read the questions in a sequential manner to the youth and recording their responses, nor is it meant to limit the amount of detail that can take place in a discussion with the youth. The YASI is structured to allow for more information to be recorded in the note section of each domain and it is recommended, as this will enhance the report component of the program.

## **C. Pre-Screen Assessment**

The pre-screen assessment is composed of 32 items that are split between legal history and social history domains. The items within this version include both static and dynamic risk factors and a minimal number of protective factor responses. The pre-screen will be used to assess the overall risk level of the case and help to make a decision whether a more detailed assessment is needed.

## **D. Implementation of the YASI**

All youth brought before the court will have a full assessment prior to the youth being placed on an order of supervision. Youth on consent decrees will have a YASI pre-screen and only those identified as medium or high risk will have a complete YASI. It is best practice to interview the youth and the family as well as collateral contacts/information. Other collateral information can come from the school, the family, or other resources that the youth or family identifies.

## **E. Procedure for YASI Pre-Screens**

All new Detention cases will have a YASI pre-screen completed within ten (10) calendar days of the detention hearing or by the Plea Hearing. *A copy of the pre-screen and recommendations must be submitted to the HSW Supervisor upon completion.*

All new Order-in Cases will have a YASI pre-screen completed within twenty (20) calendar days of the date stamped on the order-in referral or by the first Court Date. *A copy of the pre-screen and recommendations must be submitted to the HSW Supervisor prior to sending an intake referral to the District Attorney's Office.*

[Pre-Screen results must be presented to the Judge at the Plea Hearing for the youth, along with a detailed explanation for any type recommendation regarding the youth.](#)

## **F. Procedure for YASI Full Assessment and Behavior Analysis**

All new Detention cases will require a full YASI assessment if the risk level is moderate or high. The Full assessment and Behavior Analysis must be completed prior to disposition, but no later than forty (40) days from the Detention hearing if Disposition has not occurred. A copy of the YASI "wheel" and printout of the Behavior Analysis will be submitted to the HSW Supervisor along with the court report.

All new Order-In cases will require a full YASI assessment if the risk level is moderate or high. The Full Assessment and Behavior Analysis must be completed prior to disposition, but no later than forty (40) days from the initial hearing if Disposition has not occurred. A copy of the YASI “wheel” and printout of the Behavior Analysis will be submitted to the HSW Supervisor, along with the court report.

The YASI will be used as the basis for DCSD’s dispositional recommendations, taking into consideration specific and overall risk levels, needs, strengths, as well as the availability of community resources. The family should be aware of the information that is being put into the court report prior to the hearing and they will see the YASI results. Following the dispositional hearing, the HSW will meet with the family and review the results in more detail. This discussion will allow for the HSW to develop the case plan with the youth and family. (Please see Case Plan Policy, #20).

The full assessment (FA) builds on the pre-screen to provide a substantially more detailed assessment of the risk, needs, and strengths that are considered in building case plans for moderate and higher risk youth. The full assessment includes completing all questions in each domain. Once the full assessment is completed, the assessment results and the wheel can be generated by clicking on “FA Results”.

The Behavior Analysis is a focused exercise for guiding the development of the case plan. Once the full assessment has been completed, the Behavior Analysis can be filled in by clicking on “Behavior Analysis”, which includes the following questions:

- What is the pattern of the behavior that needs to change? (What is the referral reason? What is the charge?)
- What are the internal/external triggers? (What led to the “A”?)
- What is the intent and motivation behind the behavior? (What did they get out of it?)
- What incentives does the client have to change? (What do they value?)

## G. Re-Assessments

Youth that have a completed YASI on a caseload should be re-assessed **every one hundred eighty (180) days for low risk and every ninety (90) days for medium to high risk.** Only those low risk youth that have a full assessment need to be re-assessed. We are not re-assessing pre-screen results. If a youth receives a new referral to DCSD, they will also need a re-assessment completed at that time.

At that time the HSW should review the case plan and update progress and review the goals that have been outlined in the case. **The HSW will have five (5) work days to complete the re-assessment.** Please note that the re-assessment does not require an interview unless it is a matter of checking-in on the youth and family about a certain issue. The HSW can just copy over the scores from the previous assessment and update the areas that they know have changed.

Once the re-assessment is complete the HSW will print the re-assessment wheel and present it to the HSW Supervisor for discussion, signature and then placed in the case file.

## H. Circumstances Requiring a Re-Assessment (includes Wraparound cases)

- A new referral
- Prior to an extension
- Prior to staffing a revision for a current court order
- Prior to vacating an active Consent Decree

- Prior to a referral back to the DA's office on an active Deferred Prosecution Agreement, if there is a full assessment completed
- As part of closing a case, this will serve as an "Exit YASI" and must be attached to the closing.

Please note any change in risk level when making a referral to the District Attorney's Office as well in any documentation filed with the Court.

## **I. Additional Important Information**

If additional or updated relevant information is obtained about the client after the YASI pre-screen or full assessment has been completed but prior to disposition (including a new referral), then the HSW should update the information in the applicable domains in the existing assessment as opposed to initiating a re-assessment with the new information.

Upon receiving information at a later point after completing the YASI that a referral results in prosecution declined or dismissal, the HSW should remove any information pertaining to that referral from all applicable domains from the original YASI assessment and any subsequent assessments in which that information was included. For example, if the referral was for a battery, this referral should be removed from all relevant counts and items in the Legal History domain that include that charge (#3, Number of police contacts, is an example of an item that would need to be changed) as well as the Aggression domain. If the referral that was prosecution declined or dismissed was the client's first referral, then HSW's should see their supervisors about deleting the assessment. The HSW must also make a note in Synthesis stating that items were updated or that the assessment was deleted as a result of the prosecution declined or dismissal decision.

## **J. Exclusions**

1. No Pre-Screens or Full Assessments will be required in the following types of cases:

- Courtesy Supervision cases
- Interstate Compact cases
- Out-of-County detention cases
- Cases under the supervision of the Department of Corrections (DOC)

## **K. Documentation**

HSW's must document completion of the YASI in Synthesis Case Notes. In addition, in the event that the YASI was not completed within the established time frames, HSW's must document this in Synthesis and provide an explanation.

## **L. YASI Information Required for Service Referrals and for Central Staffing**

The most recent YASI Full Assessment wheel (or pre-screen print out of full assessment is not required in the case of low risk youth or youth referred on a sex offense) must be included with all referrals for services, including Children's Services Network, Probation Services Network, Post-Dispositional services, Central Staffing, Wraparound, FOCUS, Milwaukee County Accountability Program (MCAP), DOC, etc. Note that if staffing a revision for a court order to include one of these programs, then a new re-assessment reflecting the most up-to-date information at the time of the referral must be done. Certain services have specific YASI criteria that must be met in making service referrals. Please see "Appendix A": YASI Criteria for Services Referrals" document. This document will be updated as additional criteria for all programs are established.

Reviewed & Approved By:                     *B. Thomas Wanta*                    

**B. Thomas Wanta, Division Administrator**