



*State of Connecticut*  
JUDICIAL BRANCH  
COURT SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY NO.  
3.13

EFFECTIVE DATE:  
October 20, 2014

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SUPERSEDES:

August 15, 2008

APPROVED BY:

Executive Director

TITLE:

**FAMILY SERVICES  
FAMILY CIVIL INTAKE SCREEN**

1. **Policy** The Family Relations Counselor (FRC) will administer the Family Civil Intake Screen (FCIS) during a short calendar negotiation or as part of an office meeting once a determination has been made that a referral to Family Services is appropriate.
  
2. **Definitions**
  - A. **Comprehensive Evaluation** A process of assessing a family that includes and extends beyond providing impartial information and expert opinion to the Court by enhancing the parents' participation in a family-focused process. The evaluation process will focus on the parenting capacities and relationships between the parents and the children, giving the Court both historic and current information and assessments of the family's functioning. This process is designed to educate the parents as to how the separation/divorce will impact the child(ren), and allow the parents to explore alternative resolutions to their dispute. The outcome of the process will either result in an agreed upon parenting or visitation plan, or a recommendation to the family and Court as to what is in the best interest of the child(ren).
  
  - B. **Conflict Resolution Conference (CRC)** A confidential Alternative Dispute Resolution process for custody, visitation and/or other parenting disputes that involves meetings with the parents and the attorneys of record. Every effort will be made to assist the family in their resolution of the conflict, including the offering of recommendations at the conclusion of their involvement if the parties are unable to reach a consensus on their own.
  
  - C. **Family Civil Intake Screen (FCIS)** A screening instrument that is administered at the time a case is being referred. The screen assists the Family Relations Counselor / Family Services Supervisor in determining the most appropriate service offered by Family Services. [FM194.PDF](#). The most appropriate service is the one that is least intrusive but has the highest likelihood of resolving the referred matter.
  
  - D. **Family Civil Intake Screen Meeting** A meeting held with clients and attorneys to complete the Family Civil Intake Screen after a referral is made to Family Services by the Court outside of a short calendar negotiation.



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- E. Family Relations Counselor (FRC) A CSSD employee with the qualifications and training who performs the functions outlined in the job description for Family Relations Counselor, which can be accessed by clicking the following link: <http://zeus/AdminSvc/HRM/Job%20Descs/Job%20Descriptions%20Header.htm>.
- F. Family Services Supervisor (FSS) A CSSD employee with the qualifications and training who performs the functions outlined in the job description for Family Services Supervisor, which can be accessed by clicking the following link: <http://zeus/AdminSvc/HRM/Job%20Descs/Job%20Descriptions%20Header.htm>
- G. Issue Focused Evaluation A process of assessing a limited issue or issues impacting a family and/or a parenting plan that includes and extends beyond providing impartial information and expert opinion to the court by enhancing the parent’s participation in a limited but family-focused process. This process is designed to educate the parents as to how the issue referred by the Court will impact the child(ren), and allow the parents to explore alternative resolutions to their dispute. The outcome of the process will either result in an agreed upon parenting or visitation plan, or a written report and recommendation to the family and court as to what is in the best interest of the child(ren).
- H. Mediation An intervention intended to resolve disputes and manage conflict by facilitating the identification and exploration of issues in the decision-making process.
- I. Negotiation A conflict resolution process in which the FRC/FSS meets with the attorneys, Pro Se parties and/or the clients to the action with respect to the legal actions pending before the Court. The role of the FRC/FSS is to facilitate discussions and to assess and recommend potential solutions.
- J. Self-Represented Party A person who files an appearance to represent him or herself.

3. **General Procedures**

A. The Civil Intake Screen and Civil Court Negotiations:

- (1) Once a determination has been made by the Family Relations Counselor or Family Services Supervisor that a referral to Family Services will be made to



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assist the clients in resolving a parenting dispute, a Family Civil Intake Screen (FCIS) [FM194.PDF](#) will be completed.

- (2) The Family Civil Intake Screen will be completed by the FRC or FSS. The information necessary to complete the Family Civil Intake Screen will be gathered verbally from the parties.
- (3) In optimum situations the parties, and possibly their respective attorneys, will be in the same room during the Screening process. The presence of the attorney during the process is elective; therefore the FRC/FSS and the attorneys of record should discuss the need for counsel to be present during the entire intake screen.
- (4) Prior to bringing parties together to complete the FCIS, the FRC will canvas each parent separately regarding their concerns of any history or current domestic violence, fear, intimidation, the existence of Court Orders prohibiting contact, and level of comfort each has towards the other. The conjoint or individual application of the FCIS will be determined by the following factors:
  - a. If there are No Contact Protective Orders or No Contact Civil Restraining Orders in effect the parents will be seen separately for screening;
  - b. If one or both parties indicate they have current or prior domestic violence concerns or are fearful, or intimidated by the other party, they will be seen separately for screening;
  - c. If one or both parties indicates they are not comfortable being in the same room as the other party, the FRC will assess the depth of that discomfort and the impact it would have on their ability to provide reliable answers to the screening questions. If it is deemed by the FRC that the level of discomfort would have a debilitating effect on the efficacy of the screening process, the parties will be seen separately;
  - d. If at any time during a conjoint screen either party indicates domestic violence is or was a concern in the relationship, the parties will be separated and the remainder of the screen will be done separately.



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- e. In all other situations not addressed in a. through d. above, the parties will be seen together for the screening process. The FRC may use their professional discretion if other circumstances arise that contraindicate bringing them together for the screen.
- (5) The FRC/FSS will not complete the Family Civil Intake Screen with information provided by attorneys only.
  - (6) Under no circumstances will the Family Civil Intake Screen be handed out to clients and/or attorneys to complete.
  - (7) The FRC/FSS must complete all sections of the intake screen and will ask the parents every question contained in the Family Civil Intake Screen.
  - (8) The FRC/FSS will enter one response for each question on the screen. That response will be the lowest functioning answer that was provided by one of the parties.
  - (9) The FRC/FSS must assess each section of the screen independently and enter their rating in the Determination Point (yellow section) area of the screen. These ratings are not asked of the parents.
  - (10) Once the Family Civil Intake Screen is completed, the FRC/FSS will determine the service option that best meets the needs of the family. That determination will be dictated by the outcome of the screen, which allows for the FRC/FSS's independent assessment of the case. If the FRC/FSS deviates from the FCIS they must record their rationale in the comments section of the automated version of the screen.
  - (11) The FRC/FSS will indicate to the parties and attorneys of record the service option that will be offered to the clients. The FRC/FSS will provide a brief description of the selected process (Mediation, Conflict Resolution Conference, Issue Focused Evaluation or Comprehensive Evaluation) to the parties. The FRC/FSS will then make that service recommendation known to the Court via the use of JD-FM-230, Request for Referral form, [FM230.PDF](#).



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If the requested service is for an Issue-Focused Evaluation or a Comprehensive Evaluation, and the case has had a prior Family Services evaluation referral with a completed non-agreement report, the FRC will check the box on the Request for Referral requesting access to prior sealed Family Services reports.

**B. Cases referred to Family Services outside of Court Negotiation and the Civil Intake Screen:**

- (1) If a referral to Family Services is made by the Court outside of a short calendar negotiation, the FRC/FSS will set up an office meeting with the parties and invite the attorneys of record, in order to administer the Family Civil Intake Screen. This meeting will occur within two weeks of notification that the case has been referred to Family Services.
- (2) During a Family Civil Intake Screen Meeting, the FRC/FSS will follow the procedures outlined in Section 3.A. (1-11) of this policy.
- (3) Once the Family Civil Intake Screen is completed, the FRC/FSS will indicate to the parties and attorneys of record the service option that will be offered to the clients. The FRC/FSS will then report back to the Court the service option recommended and the amount of time necessary to complete the process via the use of JD-FM-230, Request for Referral form. If the requested service is for an Issue-Focused Evaluation or a Comprehensive Evaluation, and the case has had a prior Family Services evaluation referral with a completed non-agreement report, the FRC will check the box on the Request for Referral requesting access to prior sealed Family Services reports.
- (4) If the Court orders a specific service without prior screening (Mediation, Conflict Resolution Conference, Issue Focused Evaluation or Comprehensive Evaluation), a Family Civil Intake Screen will still be completed for the case. If the Family Civil Intake Screen indicates that a different service option would be optimal, the Family Services Supervisor may communicate this information to the Court.

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C. Post intake and referral procedures:

- (1) The Family Services Supervisor will not assign a case to Mediation, Conflict Resolution Conference, Issue Focused Evaluation or Comprehensive Evaluation if the Family Civil Intake Screen has not been completed. The FCIS is not required in those situations where the first service provided did not conclude with an agreement, but the parties agreed upon the follow-up service. However, any referral resulting from a new motion being filed must have a newly completed FCIS.
- (2) All Family Civil Intake Screens completed on the paper version must be entered into the automated version before the case is assigned by the FSS.
- (3) The Family Civil Intake Screen will not be part of a Family Services file, except as noted in point (4) below. Once the FCIS information has been entered into CMIS the paper copy can be shredded. If it is not shredded the Family Services Supervisor will be responsible for keeping all paper copies of the Family Civil Intake Screens in a general file. If the FCIS is entered solely into the automated program, no paper copy is needed.
- (4) Pages 1 and 2 of the FCIS are to be considered the Intake Form and will be printed and maintained in the case file.

4. **Exceptions** Any exception to this policy will require prior written approval from the Division's Executive Director.