



Foster Care Lingo

3-in-30

3-in-30 refers to a fairly new (2018) program in which the **DFPS** requires all children placed in foster care to attend 3 medical exams in the first 30 days of placement. First, a medical exam that must be completed within 3 business days of placement. Second, a **CANS** assessment is required for children 3 and over (see **CANS** definition). The third requirement is for a Texas Health Steps Medical Check-Up. (For more info, [click here](#))

504

Similar to an **IEP**, a 504 Plan refers to a plan for a child who qualifies under a broad federal law that protects people with special needs.¹ The 504 has fewer requirements than an **IEP**, but outlines what accommodations a student will have access to so that they are able to have equal access to the general education curriculum.

AD/AS - Adopted Daughter/ Adopted Son

Many parents use AD or AS followed by a number to represent their adopted children and protect confidentiality and provide context. For instance, instead of writing their name, I could write "My AS12" to represent my 12 year old adopted son.

ADA - Assistant District Attorney

AAL - Attorney ad Litem

The judge appoints the attorney ad litem to represent the wishes of the child. All children who have been removed from their parents will have an attorney ad litem. For children under the age of three, the Attorney ad Litem will likely also be appointed **Guardian ad Litem**.

Adversary Hearing

This is the first hearing after a child is removed and is required to take place within 14 days of removal. At this hearing CPS is required to prove they had reason to remove the child/children.

ARD - Admission, Review, and Dismissal

An ARD meeting is a meeting where teachers, parents, and other support staff come together to form an **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** for a child. (Are you preparing for an ARD for the first time? [Click Here](#) for more info on what to expect).

LOC - Level of Care : Basic, Moderate, Specialized

Basic, Moderate, and Specialized are labels the system uses to categorize a child's needs-level, with specialized being the highest level. These categories affect many parts of foster care including but not limited to, which services you qualify for, amount of paperwork required, and stipend amount.

CANS Assessment - The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment

A CANS Assessment is a part of the DFPS's required 3-in-30, and is used to gather information about youths in foster care to help their caregiver make informed decisions about their care.

CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocate

CASAs are special advocates appointed to some CPS cases. CASAs are volunteers overseen by a CASA supervisor. CASAs are a legal party in the case and speak on the child's behalf. CASA is independent of CPS.

CCMS & CCS - Child Care Management Services & Child Care Services

CCS and CCMS both refer to programs through Capital Workforce Solutions where foster parents can apply for subsidized child care. To qualify, both parents in the home must work a minimum of 40 hours a week. [Read more here](#))

Children "From Hard Places"

"From hard places" is a phrase coined by the late Dr. Karyn Purvis that refers to any child with trauma in their background. This term has found favor in the foster care community and tends to replace the term "at-risk".

CM - Case Manager

Case Managers, sometimes called Family Service Workers, are appointed to licensed foster parents by the [Child Placing Agency](#). Case managers are not affiliated with a legal party but provide support to the foster parents as well as holding foster homes accountable to complying with [minimum standards](#).

CPA - Child Placing Agency

A Child Placing Agency is an independent organization that recruits, trains, licenses, and supports foster parents. When a child comes into care through CPS, a broadcast is sent out to all the Child Placing Agencies in the area. These agencies then submit to CPS the family's home study, and, if the family is selected by CPS, work with CPS in placing the child in the foster home.

CW - Caseworker

A child's caseworker is the person appointed by CPS to manage their case while they are in CPS's care. This person is the point of contact on the case and is responsible for keeping up to date on how the child is doing. Since CPS is a legal party in the case, they also report to the judge and make a recommendation on how they think the case is going.

DFPS - Department of Family Protective Services

The DFPS is the broader agency under which CPS functions.

ECI - Early Childhood Intervention

ECI uses a tool called the Battelle Development Inventory to assess development in social, emotional, self-help, communication, motor functions and cognitive skills in children under the age of 3. If the child is found to have over a 33% delay, ECI will provide them with therapy targeted towards that particular delay. This could include occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.

FD/FS - Foster Son/ Foster Daughter

Like "AD" and "AS" "FD" and "FS" are used to denote foster children. If I had a 3 year old foster daughter I might write, "My FD3..."

Final Hearing or Trial

At the final hearing or trial the judge (or jury if at a jury trial) must decide whether or not a child is to be returned to their parent(s), or whether parent's rights should be restricted or terminated. If an extension was not granted, this should take place approximately one year after the case start date.

GAL - Guardian ad Litem

In addition to an **Attorney ad Litem**, children in foster care are also appointed a Guardian ad Litem. Where the **Attorney ad Litem** is charged with representing the child's expressed wishes, the Guardian ad Litem represents the best interest of the child. Many times, if a **CASA** has been appointed, the judge will appoint **CASA** as the Guardian ad Litem.

ICWA - Indian Child Welfare Act

The Indian Child Welfare Act is a Federal law that aims to prevent Indian Children being separated from their tribe. This provision was put in place in response to disproportionately high numbers of children being removed from Indian families and being placed in families disconnected from their culture. To read more about the ICWA and what it means for foster care and adoption, [click here](#).

IEP - Individualized Education Plan

An IEP is a document written by school staff and parents to state the specific educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. These plans state reasonable goals for the child and state what the school will provide to help the child achieve those goals. (see definition for [ARD](#))

JMC - Joint Managing Conservatorship

JMC happens when CPS and the parent are granted co-conservatorship.

Legal Risk

A legal-risk placement is one where parental rights have not been terminated (or they have been terminated but parents appealed) but it is believed the the case is steering towards termination. Some foster parents choose to only take legal risk placements in order to have a higher probability of the child being available for adoption.

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary meeting at a neutral location that happens without a judge. In this meeting, a non-biased moderator facilitates discussion between legal parties. This process can help parties come to a peaceful agreement and avoid adversarial court hearings. In many cases, an agreement can be made which avoids parties going to trial.

Minimum Standards

Minimum Standards refers to a long document of rules and regulations for child placing agencies. These standards are what the state has deemed to be the minimum requirements for caring for a child in the system. These regulations include things from requirements for preliminary service plans to having outlet covers & double locking psychotropic medications. To view the full Minimum Standards Document, [Click Here](#)

OT - Occupational Therapy

Occupation Therapy helps kids with physical, sensory, or cognitive delays.

PC - Permanency Conference

A Permanency Conference happens at the DFPS office and does not involve a judge. The parties invited include biological parents and their attorneys, CPS [case workers](#), [GAL](#), foster parents, and anyone else the [DFPS](#) invites who can speak into the needs of the child. These meetings are facilitated by a mediator and go over the permanency goals for the case and what all is being done to achieve that goal. It's helpful to note that CPS will have a primary and a secondary goal for the case.

PCIT - Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

PCIT is a type of therapy targeted towards children 2-7 with emotional and/or behavioral issues. PCIT trains parents to cultivate positive parent-child interactions. This particular therapy is said to be beneficial for children with many behavior disorders including: Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, and behaviors stemming from trauma.

PMC - Permanent Managing Conservatorship

PMC can only be granted by a judge and is appointed after a parent loses their parental rights.

Permanency Hearings

During a permanency hearing the judge reviews reasons why the child is in care, where the child is placed, whether the biological parents are able/willing to provide a safe environment for the child/children, and other determinations relevant to the care of the child. The initial Permanency Hearing happens 180 days after removal and subsequent Permanency Hearings happen every 120 days.

PMN- Primary Medical Needs

PMN refers to children who are unable to live without mechanical support or services due to life-threatening conditions² For the PMN Handbook, [click here](#)

Respite

Respite is an extended version of babysitting for foster parents. While short-term support persons are only able to watch children for a max of 72 hours, respite caregivers are able to watch children for up to 2 weeks. Though requirements vary from agency to agency, most agencies have higher requirements for people providing respite.

RTC - Residential Treatment Center

In the context of foster care, an RTC is a live-in facility that cares for children who, due to extreme emotional and/or behavioral needs, are unable to live in a home setting. The goal is for this to be a temporary solution and that the child will come to a place where they are able to transition into a more traditional home setting.

SIL - Supervised Independent Living

SIL is an option where foster youth can voluntarily extend their time in foster care. This allows the youth to still receive services and case management helping them to be independent and self-sufficient.

SpED - Special Education

SpED is an abbreviation for special education

Status Hearing

If CPS is granted **Temporary Managing Conservatorship**, a status hearing is required within 60 days. The child's status and permanency plan will be reviewed at this time. This happens at court in front of a judge.

Superior Star Medicaid

Superior Star Medicaid is a special Medicaid specifically for foster children. All children are eligible for this Medicaid while they are in the foster care system. Upon adoption, some children are able to qualify for a different Medicaid but children will not keep Superior Star after they leave foster care.

TBRI - Trust-Based Relational Intervention

Trust-based relational intervention is a research based caregiver model for providing support and care for kids from hard places. TBRI is **trauma-informed** and science based. For a quick intro to TBRI, [click here](#).

TMC - Temporary Managing Conservatorship

When CPS removes a child from their parents they must back up their claims to a judge. If the Judge decides that CPS has enough evidence to support the removal, they can grant CPS temporary custody of the child/children. This temporary custody is called temporary managing conservatorship

TPR - Termination of Parental Rights

At the end of a case, if a judge decides that it is unsafe for a child to return to their parent(s), they can terminate rights. This termination must be based on a predetermined list of grounds for termination. (To read the family code, click [here](#))

Trauma Informed Care

Trauma informed care refers to ways of relating and care for children who have experienced trauma. This means not only understanding the effects of trauma on the brain, but also recognizing trauma's effect on the whole child, including their health and behaviors. The term, "trauma informed" can be used as a descriptor for things like daycare or therapy (i.e. a trauma-informed daycare, trauma-informed therapy, etc.).

WIC - Women Infant and Children

WIC is a state sponsored program that provides formula and food for breastfeeding women and children under the age of 3. Foster children automatically qualify for WIC through Medicaid.