

The Child Welfare System and Trafficking

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Description of Session

The presenter will summarize the current policy and practices of local Departments of Social Services and the state Division of Social Services and highlight opportunities for improvements to include those described in Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014.

Goals of Session (Presenter)

- Provide brief background information on the purpose of the child welfare system
- Summarize why child welfare workers need to be aware of this issue and discuss the vulnerabilities of children who come into contact with the child welfare system
- Provide an overview of policy (where we are now), and opportunities to improve (where we would like to be)
- Discuss current Division initiatives and processes for improving policy around child trafficking
- Briefly discuss provisions of P.L. 113-183 and implications for the child welfare system in North Carolina

Goals of Session (Participants)

Understand and describe the basic purpose of the child welfare system

Identify vulnerabilities of children who come into contact with the child welfare system

Demonstrate a basic understanding of child welfare policy and processes, as well as opportunities to strengthen child welfare response to trafficking

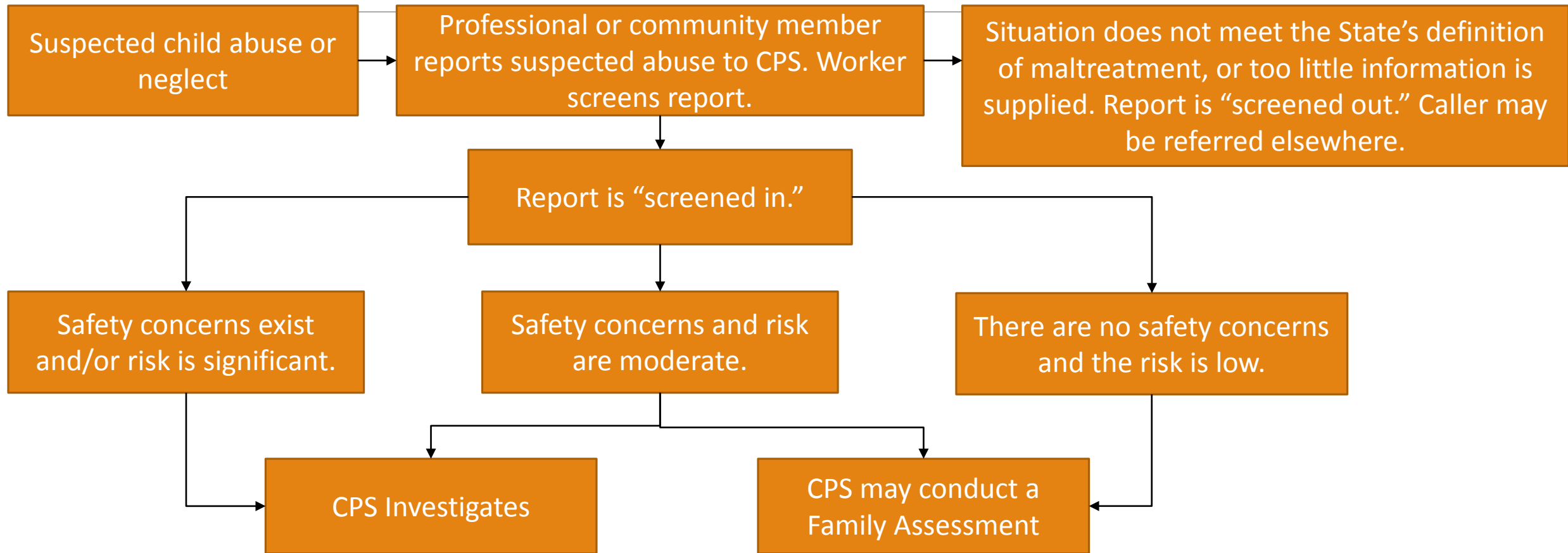
Describe current Division initiatives and/or policy revision currently underway at the Division designed to address child trafficking, including the impact of P.L. 113-183

Child Welfare System: In a Nutshell

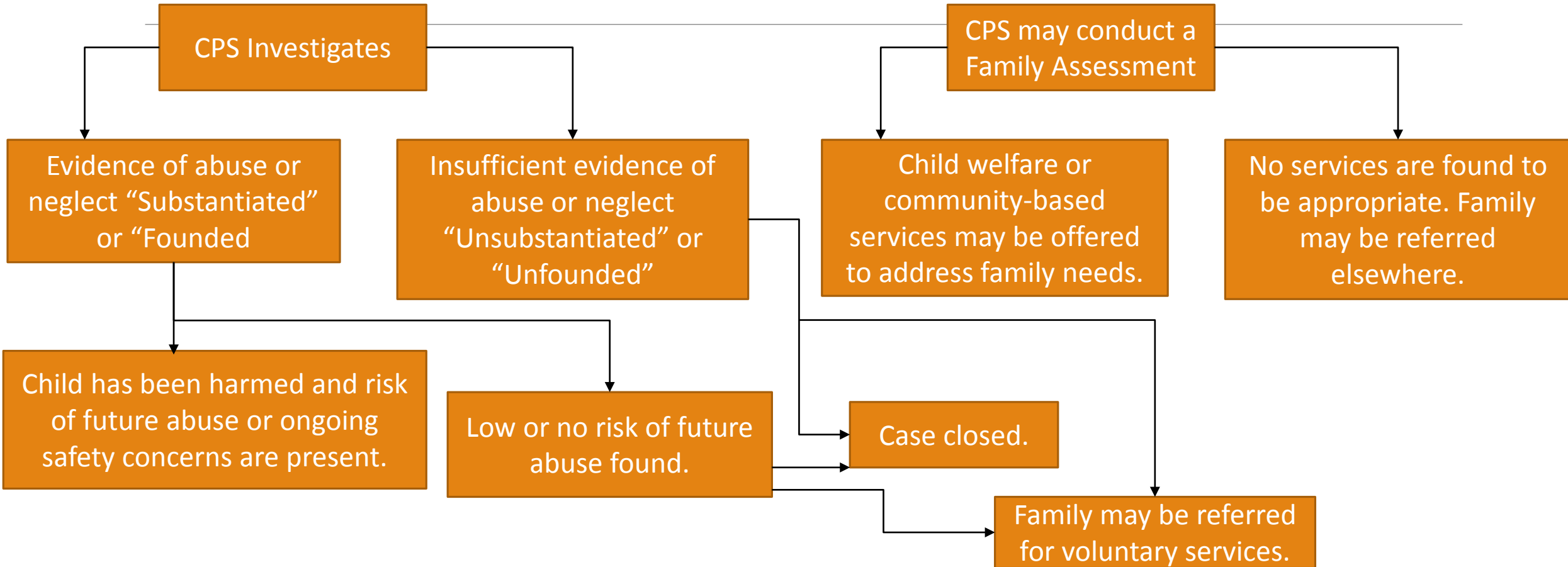
The child welfare system is a group of services designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families to care for their children successfully.

How the Child Welfare System Works (The Child Welfare Information Gateway, February, 2013)

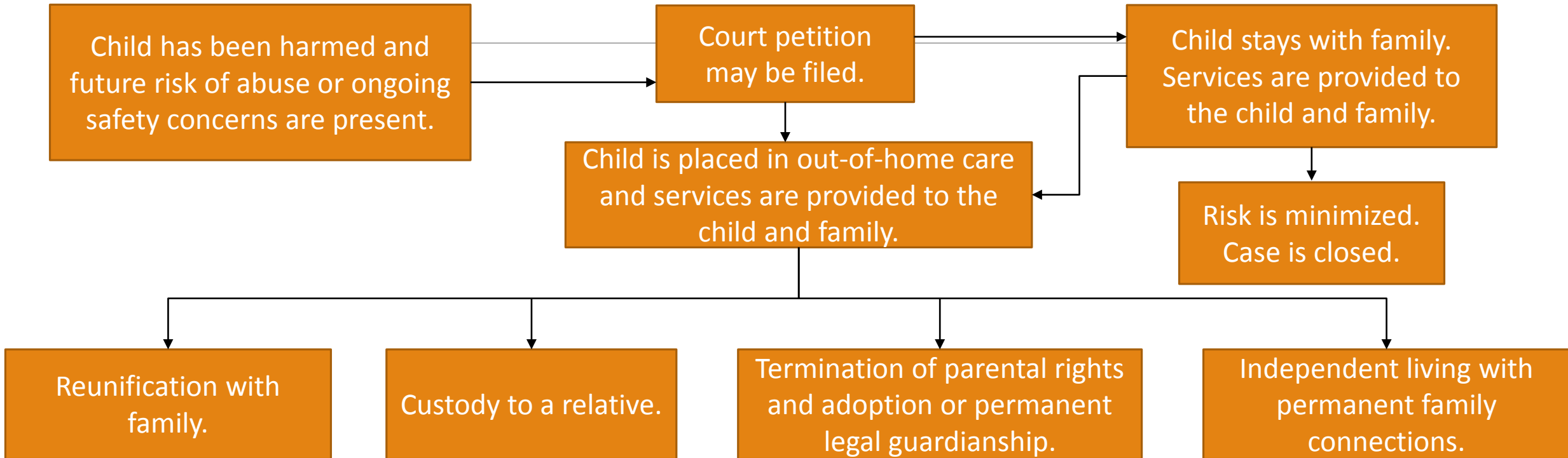
Child Welfare System Flow Chart



Child Welfare System Flow Chart



Child Welfare System Flow Chart



Why do Child Welfare Workers need to be aware of human trafficking?

Trafficking could be occurring simultaneously with other forms of maltreatment in a single case

Prior maltreatment of a child or youth could contribute to that child or youth being vulnerable to traffickers

Parents, family members, and other caregivers could be the traffickers

Emerging data indicates that child protection workers are encountering children and youth who have been trafficked

What makes children in the Child Welfare System more vulnerable?

Lack of supervision, parental involvement, or familial support

Previous history of abuse and trauma and/or history of family dysfunction, substance abuse, or domestic violence

Limited social support system, low self-esteem

Cognitive limitations, mental or emotional health issues

Community conditions such as poverty, high rates of crime, existence of an adult prostitution market and large populations of transient people (truckers, tourists, military personnel, etc.)

Certain populations

- LGBTQ youth
- American Indian youth

Child Welfare Policy

Child Protective Services (CPS)

- Intake and Screening
- Assessment
- In-Home Services

Child Placement

- Foster Care

Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183)

- Requires child welfare agencies to report the annual number of children in foster care who are identified as sex trafficking.
- Requires child welfare agencies to demonstrate that they have consulted with other specific agencies having experience with youth at-risk and have developed policies and procedures, including caseworker training, to identify, document in case records, and determine services for children and youth who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked.
- Requires child welfare agencies to develop and implement protocols to locate children missing from foster care, determine factors that lead to the child's being absent from care, and determine the child's experiences while absent from care.

Opportunities to Strengthen Policy

Current Policy Revision in Process

- Intake
- Placement (Foster Care)
- Forms revision and/or other data collection revision

Other Opportunities

- Development of practice guide for child welfare workers
- Training
- PNR work groups

Questions?

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