 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES <b>Family Services Policy Manual</b>		<h1>175</h1>
Chapter:	Working with Adolescents and Justice-Involved Youth	
Subject:	Substance Use Testing, Screening, and Treatment for Youth	Page 1 of 5
Approved:	Karen Shea, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 05/10/2019
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 175	Dated: 12/20/2007

## Purpose


This policy is designed to provide guidelines for family services workers, to identify substance use by youth, support screenings, assessments and plan for appropriate treatment and interventions. These guidelines also clarify the authority and responsibility of the family services worker for recommending substance use testing, as directed by the court and/or to support treatment services and further family services worker assessment.

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## Related Policies

- Family Services [Policy 122](#): Case Plan Reviews and Permanency Hearings for Children and Youth in Custody
- Family Services [Policy 65](#): Substance Use Disorder Screenings & Drug Testing Caretakers
- Family Services [Policy 161](#): Youth Assessment Screening Instrument (YASI)
- Family Services [Policy 60](#): Juvenile Proceedings Act – CHINS (C) and (D) Assessments Definitions

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Family Services [Policy 162](#): Juvenile Probation

## Definitions

**Substance Use Disorder (SUD):** A DSM-5 diagnosis made by a licensed behavioral health clinician. The diagnosis is measured on a continuum from mild to severe. Criteria include tolerance or withdrawal, loss of control of frequency and/or amount of substance use and continued despite adverse consequences. Note: The DSM-5 combined the DSM-IV categories of substance abuse and substance dependence into a single disorder. The following describe 3 tools available to determine the presence of substance use and the purpose of each tool.

**Screening:** A preliminary systematic procedure to evaluate the likelihood that an individual is abusing substances or has a substance use disorder. It identifies whether or not a thorough assessment by a licensed behavioral health clinician is necessary. A screening is intended to identify people at risk for or actually experiencing harm associated with their use of alcohol and/or drugs. Anyone can administer a screen with appropriate training.


**Assessment:** A process by which a licensed counselor identifies and evaluates an individual's strengths, challenges, problems and needs in order to develop a diagnostic evaluation of the client's substance use disorder, the level of severity (mild, moderate or severe) and any co-existing conditions with the goal of providing an integrated approach to treatment planning. This should be driven by ASAM (American Society of Addiction Medicine) criteria for diagnostic consistency. It involves a review of an individual's alcohol and/or drug use pattern and areas affected by the substance use disorder such as family and social relationships, criminal justice and psychological distress. An assessment is intended to gather detailed information about an individual's pattern of substance use and subsequent consequences to inform the treatment plan.

**Substance Use Testing:** An accredited laboratory test, to determine if drugs/alcohol or metabolites are present by testing through bodily fluids such as urine, saliva, sweat, hair, breath or blood.

## Policy

### Screening and Referral for Assessment

Family services workers, as part of their initial assessment, case planning, ongoing work and case closure with youth should use the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) to identify areas of strength and risk. Screenings should be a collaborative process that involves the family services worker, the youth and the family (when

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appropriate). The youth’s view of themselves, their strengths and challenges will play a key role in this process.

When the YASI indicates risk pertaining to youth substance use, the family services worker will refer the youth for a substance abuse assessment, conducted by a qualified provider. Each district office should have identified youth specific substance abuse assessment providers through a [VT ADAP Program](#) or another contracted provider. If the substance abuse assessment indicates that the youth needs substance abuse treatment, the family services worker will support the youth in accessing the resources to follow treatment recommendations. Treatment plan recommendations may include but are not limited to; individual substance abuse counseling, substance use/abuse education group, Youth Treatment Court (where available), attendance at AA/NA meetings, intensive outpatient treatment or residential treatment.

### Substance Testing

It may be recommended by treatment providers and/or ordered by the court, driven by the treatment plan for a youth to complete substance use testing. The family services worker is responsible for facilitating the substance use testing.


Each district should utilize a professional that specializes in administering substance testing, most commonly in the form of Urine Analysis (UA). Family services workers should consider the youth’s history and the impact of the experience or providing a UA observed or not.

Substance tests are to be utilized when:

- During the initial assessment and there is an indication of safety concerns due to substance use, which is documented by a credible source;
- Directed by substance use treatment; or
- Ordered by the Court through the Probation Certificate.

### Obtaining Youth Consent to Distribute Substance Use Testing, Screening, and Assessment Outcomes Without A Court Order

The family services worker shall obtain the youth’s consent to participate in substance use testing, screening, assessment and/or distribution of testing results regardless of custody status. Per Vermont Statute [18 V.S.A. § 4226](#) the consent for a youth to participate should be in writing by all youth ages 12 and up, see FS 300(b), Consent to Release Results of Client Substance Use Testing.

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**Obtaining Youth Consent to Distribute Substance Use Testing, Screening, and Assessment Outcomes Ordered by the Court**

If a youth is court ordered to undergo substance use testing, screening or assessment, the youth’s consent is still legally necessary for family services worker to provide the court with any updates. The youth should be encouraged to comply with the Court’s Order and be reminded of the treatment plan goals in place, as well as the consequences for not engaging in the requirements of the probation certificate.

**Release of Substance Use Testing, Screening, and Assessment Information**


Federal law [42 CFR Part 2](#) prohibits the release of a youth’s substance abuse treatment information (including substance use testing, screening, assessment information), unless the youth has signed a release granting family services worker permission regardless of the youth’s custody or probation status. The youth should be informed by family services worker that the written release(s), which shall specify the reasons and extent of disclosure and specify the recipient of the information, dictated by the youth. See FS 300(b), Consent to Release Results of Client Substance Use Testing.

**Youth Refusal to Release Results of Substance Use Testing, Screening, or Assessments**

Despite the efforts of the family services worker, youth may refuse to sign a release of information and/or refuse to engage in substance use testing, screening and assessment. If the youth is not compliant with screening, substance use testing, assessment or treatment the family services worker should engage in conversation with youth in order to understand the reasoning for refusal. Should these efforts be unsuccessful family services worker may consult with the State’s Attorney or Assistant Attorney General (AAG) to determine if court intervention is necessary or warranted. Family services worker can then determine the course of action most appropriate for that specific youth such as: restricting privileges, modification to services referred and/or changes in legal custody status. A violation of probation (VOP) can also be filed and the family services worker can request to modify probation conditions to address the specific area of concern, pertaining to substance use or safety.

**Use of Results**

Screening, assessments and substance use testing, regardless of the results, requires a response from the family services worker. For example, negative substance use test results could mean an increase in privileges, decrease in supervision level, or other adjustments to case planning. The results of a positive substance use test should be used to identify appropriate interventions and prompt exploration of the risk of continued use. Substance use test results do not indicate the level of use disorder nor

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does a negative test reveal that a youth does not abuse substances or have a substance use disorder.

## Tasks

### Family Services Worker will:

- Utilize the YASI techniques to inform their work with youth and to influence referrals for assessment, substance use testing and case planning recommendations.
- Support the youth with scheduling an assessment with the qualified provider and following all recommendations as part of treatment planning.
- Make appropriate referrals to assessors and treatment providers. The family services worker will receive the results in a timely manner and use the information for case planning and safety planning.
- Attempt to obtain a release of information FS-300(b), Consent to Release Results of Clients Substance Use Testing from the youth to receive the results of assessments, substance use tests and progress reports from the youth's treatment provider as well as to be able to provide treatment team members with information from DCF as well.
- Refer a youth for a substance use testing. The family services worker will complete the Drug Screen Requisition and fax/scan it to the collection site, professional and/or the primary care provider. The collection site, professional or primary care provider will have their own release paperwork that the family services worker will also need to complete.
- Communicate with treatment providers and others involved in supporting the youth on a monthly basis to assess danger and risk as it relates to progress in recovery. A Family Group Conference, Restorative Family Group Conference or Family Safety Planning meetings can be ways to accomplish this.

### Supervisor will:

- Review the family services workers assessment, collaborative efforts and give direction around frequency of testing and guidance for case plan goals and ongoing casework.