



# Allegheny County Department of Human Services Policy and Procedure Child Welfare Status and Hello Baby Involvement

September 2020

## **POLICY: CHILD WELFARE STATUS AND HELLO BABY INVOLVEMENT**

- Just like all parents, a parent with a new baby who also has an active Allegheny County child welfare case may opt out of either: (1) having their eligibility determined for Hello Baby Priority Services and/or (2) receiving Hello Baby services despite being eligible.
- Opting out, refusing, or dropping out of the Hello Baby program will not impact a family's child welfare case or status.
- Hello Baby services are not mandated, and all parents are able to refuse or accept services.

## **PROCEDURE: COLLABORATION BETWEEN CHILD WELFARE AND HEALTHY START, HELLO BABY PRIORITY PROVIDER**

**Healthy Start (priority provider) will have access to information about child welfare involvement (and other key system involvement) when they receive a Hello Baby referral.**

- DHS allows authorized users within contracted provider agencies to view information about individual clients and their service involvement across many data sources in the Data Warehouse through an application called ClientView.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. It is worth noting that during community feedback discussions some community members preferred that ClientView be used sparingly and that Healthy Start should first reach out to the family and learn their story before looking at records. However, in the final implementation discussions with our partners from the Camden Coalition and Healthy Start, it was decided that providers would greatly benefit from background data about clients to inform engagement.
- Demographic information is also available, as well as service plans, assessments and electronic documents.
- This information will be helpful for the Hello Baby care team to understand a family's needs and complex risk factors.

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<sup>1</sup> The Allegheny County ClientView application provides information such as client demographics, services provided across multiple DHS program offices, electronic documents, service plans and assessments in order to help better serve our clients through integrated service delivery.

**Hello Baby care team will engage with the family before reaching out to the child welfare caseworker and supervisor.**

- Once the family is engaged, has consented to Hello Baby care team collaborating with child welfare, and has signed the appropriate release of information, Hello Baby care team will initiate contact with the caseworker and supervisor.
- Healthy Start will email or call the listed caseworker from the client's ClientView information.
- The purpose of this initial contact is for the Hello Baby care team to learn about the family's needs, as identified by child welfare, and determine if there are any imminent risk or safety issues to be aware of.

**Hello Baby care team will establish care coordination for family and encourage family to include child welfare caseworker as part of the team.**

- The family has the choice whether caseworker is part of their care team, but Hello Baby will encourage the family to include child welfare staff as an essential member of the working team.
- If family agrees to child welfare and Hello Baby collaboration — there will be open communication between Hello Baby and child welfare. The Hello Baby care team, child welfare, and the family will decide who will take the lead service provider role and who will act in a supportive capacity.
- If the family declines interaction between Hello Baby and child welfare, the teams will not work together.

**Child Welfare Requirements for Hello Baby Participants**

- Child welfare caseworkers are still required to complete all state mandated requirements for investigations and cases (safety and risk assessments, Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST) assessments, etc.).
- Child welfare caseworker and Hello Baby care team should work together, with the family, to select appropriate services and goals to reduce duplication and burden on the family.

**If child welfare referral is made while family is engaged with Hello Baby Priority, child welfare will find Hello Baby service involvement in ClientView and contact Hello Baby Priority to gather collateral information.**

- Child welfare caseworker will reach out to Hello Baby care team to gather information about family's needs and other relevant information pertaining to the referral.
- Child welfare caseworker, Hello Baby care team, and family will work together to establish goals and determine next steps and any appropriate services that might assist the family.

**Shared case planning and consultation**

- Healthy Start will establish Hello Baby Priority case consultations, and child welfare staff will participate for all families they are involved with. This will provide an opportunity to discuss and learn how Hello Baby and child welfare work together.
- Hello Baby care team will participate in conferencing and teaming meetings if family requests their participation.

**PROCEDURE: AS MANDATED REPORTERS, HEALTHY START WILL REPORT SUSPECTED INSTANCES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

- Healthy Start staff is required to report suspected abuse or neglect to ChildLine. When a family is already involved with child welfare, Healthy Start is also encouraged to reach out to the assigned caseworker to discuss the report.