

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment



INFORMATION SHEET

CHILDREN & YOUTH

What is the CANS?

The CANS, or the **Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths**, is a tool used by caregivers, case managers, clinicians, care coordinators, conservatorship workers — all the people that provide help and support to you and your family. It helps in gathering the information needed to make decisions about the best course of action to take to address your needs and achieve your goals.

What is the purpose of the CANS?

The information from the CANS assessment supports the decisions made for you and other children and youth in foster care, helping to provide better care to you, and allowing for the tracking and monitoring of your care and progress on your goals. The CANS captures information on how you are feeling and doing — in school or work, at home, and in your relationships with friends and others.

When is the CANS completed and by whom?

All children, ages 3-17, who enter substitute care must have a CANS completed within 30 days of coming into care as part of their assessment and service planning process. STAR Health clinicians, who are trained and certified in the use of this tool, will complete the CANS as part of the ongoing service planning process. The CANS is completed with input from you and all the members of your treatment team.

How does the CANS affect me?

Your input in the CANS is both essential and invaluable. The CANS is used to communicate information about your needs and strengths, and that of your family. This information will be gathered with you as part of a collaborative team process in order to create a shared understanding of the problems, barriers, assets and

supports that exist for you, and to be able to create a more effective plan of care for you and your family. You will be able to express your thoughts, experiences and opinions regarding the ratings of the CANS items, and you will be given a copy of the final assessment and service plan that is developed using the CANS.

How can I use the CANS with my CVS worker and my treatment team?

The CANS helps by letting others know about your needs and strengths, as well as plan for your care. It is also used to communicate to others your family's needs and strengths. One of its main goals is to help the team agree on what you need help with and to identify the appropriate supports to address those needs. The CANS helps to organize information about you from teachers, doctors, other family members (any significant people involved in you and your family's life) about your needs and strengths to better guide the decisions about your care.

How is the CANS scored?

The CANS assesses your needs and strengths as well as that of your caregivers. The item ratings translate directly into action and are rated as follows:

For Needs

- 0 = no need for action
- 1 = monitoring
- 2 = action is needed
- 3 = immediate action

For Strengths

- 0 = centerpiece strength
- 1 = useful strength
- 2 = potential strength
- 3 = no strength identified

Where can I learn more?

Please send any questions about the CANS for the state of Texas to: CANS@dfps.state.tx.us.

Information about the CANS can also be found at the John Praed Foundation: praedfoundation.org