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WHAT IS A CHILD REQUIRING ASSISTANCE (CRA) CLAIM?

What is a CRA?

A Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) claim is a court case in which the Juvenile Court is asked to help parents and/or school officials with the supervision and/or management of a child who is at least 6 but not yet 18 years old.

There are five types of Child Requiring Assistance that can be filed with the Juvenile Court:

1. **"Runaway"** - repeatedly runs away from home of the parent, legal guardian or custodian.
2. **"Stubborn Child"** – repeatedly fails to obey the lawful and reasonable rules of a parent, which interferes with the parent/guardian/custodian's ability to adequately care for and protect the child.
3. **"School Offender"** – repeatedly fails to obey lawful and reasonable school regulations.
4. **"Truant"** – willfully fails to attend school for **more than 8 school days** in a quarter; and
5. **"Sexually exploited"** -- and has been subjected to sexual exploitation.

Who may file a CRA?

A parent, legal guardian or custodian may file a CRA petition on their child who is at least 6 but not yet 18 is a runaway or truant.

The parent or police may file a CRA petition on a child who is at least 6 but not yet 18 who is a sexually exploited child.

A **school district** may file a CRA petition on a child who is at least 6 but not yet 16 who is a **school offender or truant**.

What happens on the first court date?

Once the appropriate person files the CRA with the juvenile court, the court will assign a date for a preliminary hearing. The child and their parent(s) will be assigned an attorney through the appropriate state agency. Ideally the parties will meet with their attorney before the hearing date but sometimes this doesn't happen and the initial meeting will be on the same day as the hearing. Almost every CRA will be assigned to a probation officer and a Department of Children and Families (DCF) social worker.

At the preliminary hearing, the court will hear from each party. After each party has had an opportunity to say their piece, the judge will dismiss the petition, order informal assistance, or schedule a "fact finding" hearing. At this hearing, the court may grant temporary custody to DCF.

What happens if a child does not go to the hearing or runs away?

If a child fails to come to court or runs away, the court may issue a warrant of protective custody. The warrant does not go into the police computer system. Police should bring the child to court if the child is found. If the police find the child outside of court business hours, the police should take the child home or to a shelter (if one exists). A child may not be handcuffed, taken to the police station, placed in a court lockup facility, or placed in DYS if the police pick him/her up on a warrant of protective custody.