

Karyn Tribble, PsyD, LCSW
Director

Memorandum

Date: September 22, 2025
To: ACBHD All Providers
From: Laphonsa Gibbs, Director, ACBHD Child and Young Adult System of Care
Subject: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Requirement

Greetings, Alameda County Behavioral Health Department Providers and Partners:

Effective **October 6, 2025**, under your contract, the **Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths** (CANS) requirements will change. Only the IP-CANS questions will be required as part of the transition toward implementing a “One CANS per youth” model for ages 6-21 years. The CANS must be completed by the mental health provider at intake, every 6 months, at discharge, and annually.

The CA Department of Social Services (CDSS) adopted the CA Integrated Practice IP-CANS as the functional assessment tool to be completed collaboratively through the Child & Family Team (CFT) processes to guide case planning. Beginning July 1, 2025, all placing agencies* are required to ensure the collaborative completion of an IP-CANS tool for all children, youth, and nonminor dependents as described in this letter and in accordance with all previously issued requirements referenced above. According to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 16560 (b)(4), placing agency means a county child welfare agency, a county probation department, or an Indian tribe that has entered into an agreement pursuant to WIC Section 10553.1.

The IP-CANS includes the CA core 50 items, a module on Potentially Traumatic/Adverse Childhood Experiences (yes/no), and a module for Early Childhood (birth-five). The ACBHD CANS (Birth-24) includes the CA IP-CANS items plus a few more domains and modules. Please note, the Social Services requirement does not change the mental health requirement.



Requirement:

ACBHD will require completion of the IP-CANS. At the same time, we recognize that individual agencies may choose the approach that best fits their practice. Agencies may continue encouraging staff to complete the full Birth-24 CANS version, or they may decide to focus on completing only the IP-CANS items. Our goal is to provide flexibility while ensuring consistency on required elements.

Attached to this memo are the IP-CANS Manual/ Reference Guide and rating sheet in English and Spanish.

- [IP-CANS Manual/ Reference Guide](#)
- The IP-CANS Rating Sheet- [English](#) | [Spanish](#) (pdf)
- [CDSS IP-CANS Resources](#) | [CANS and Tiered Rate Structure](#)

Data Entry of CANS and PSC-35- CHANGES TO OA

Objective Arts (OA) is the data platform that ACBHD uses to store their CANS data. All required questions will have an *asterisk**. All modules (including preschool, school, developmental needs, substance use, suicide risk, dangerousness/ violence, vocational/ career) and some domains (developmental factors/milestones, traumatic stress symptoms, and transition age youth) will be optional. Each Agency can still decide to complete all questions even the optional ones.

A Summary Dashboard has been added to Objective Arts. The dashboard includes graphics with the following criteria: most recent actionable needs, actionable needs count, PSC-35 scores over time, and strengths over time.

Print options

In Objective Arts you can select a new print option from the drop down on the lower left corner on the screen. You can select print “IP-CANS Scoresheet”. This will abstract only the IP-CANS data. Please print “IP-CANS Scoresheet” if a placing Agency (Probation or Child Welfare) request a copy of the CANS.

Changes to Uploaders

For agencies that enter CANS data into their own EHR systems, no significant changes are required. You may continue sending ACBHD the full Birth-24 CANS version, or, if preferred, you may choose to submit only the IP-CANS.



Please contact Jessica Vigil if you have any questions related to CANS or Objective Arts navigation support at Jessica.Vigil2@acgov.org.

Attachments

- IP-CANS Rating Sheet- [English](#) | [Spanish](#) (pdf) (other threshold languages will be coming soon)
- IP-CANS Manual English (other threshold languages will be coming soon)