



# PRE-IMPLEMENTATION TESTING RESULTS

**NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY RESPONSE GUIDE**



Evident Change partners with systems professionals and communities to get to the root of their biggest challenges, and gives them the tools and knowledge to achieve better outcomes for everyone involved. Because when we join forces with those who work in our systems and the people they serve, we make our systems—and our society—more equitable from the inside out.

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# AGENDA

1

Context and discovery findings

2

Pre-implementation testing results

3

Recommendations

4

Reflections and closing



**1**

# **CONTEXT AND DISCOVERY FINDINGS**

5

## NEW HAMPSHIRE REPORTING LANDSCAPE

- About 43% of the 18,825 calls made to the hotline in 2020 were screened out.
- Most reports are made by educators/childcare, law enforcement, and parents/guardians/families.
- Overreporting and underreporting practices are occurring.
- Racial disproportionality in reporting begins at the reporting decision.
- Families, reporters, DCYF, and prevention partners face challenges with current mandated reporting practices.

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## A COMMUNITY RESPONSE GUIDE . . .

- Is a web-based decision-support tool.
- Guides professional reporters and concerned citizens about reporting and alternative supports.
- Is designed through a data-driven, **community-based** workgroup process.
- Becomes a **community intervention** through the design process itself.

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# BRINGING THE BEST OF DECISION SUPPORT TO THE REPORTING DECISION



Equity



Accuracy



Consistency

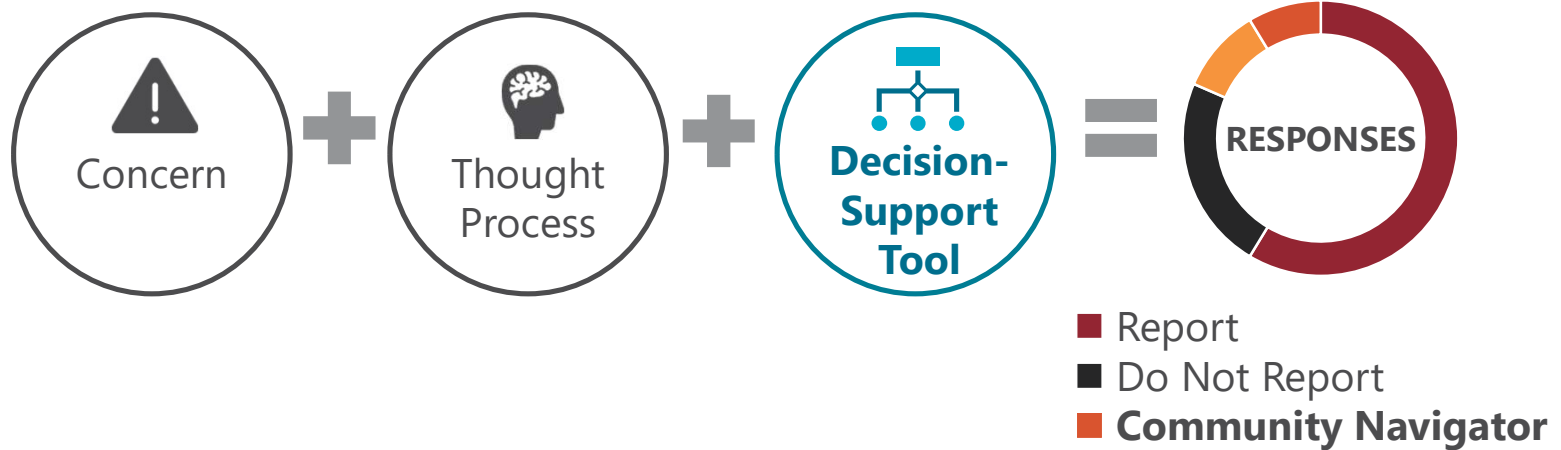


Utility

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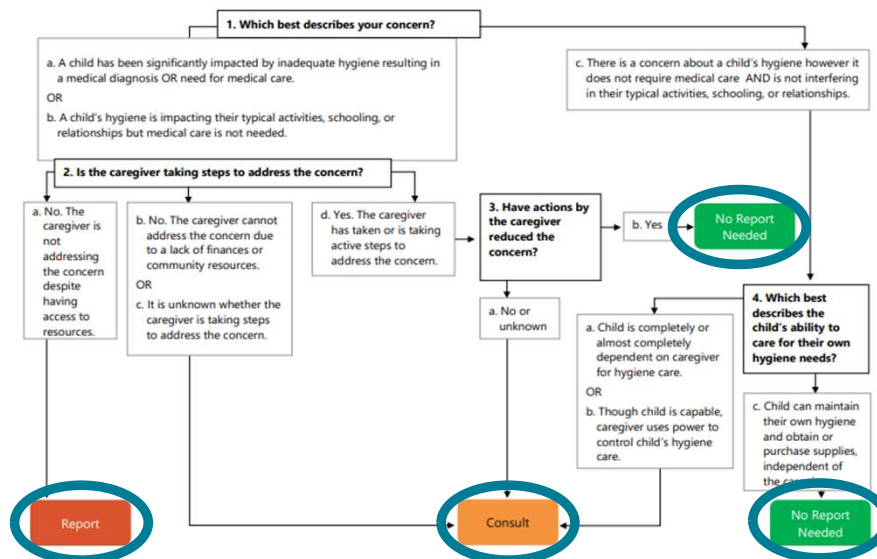
## WHAT IF THE PROCESS WERE DIFFERENT?



# RESPONSE DECISIONS

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## CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD'S HYGIENE



## CRG RECOMMENDATIONS

**Report**



Make a report to the local child protection agency immediately.

**Consult**



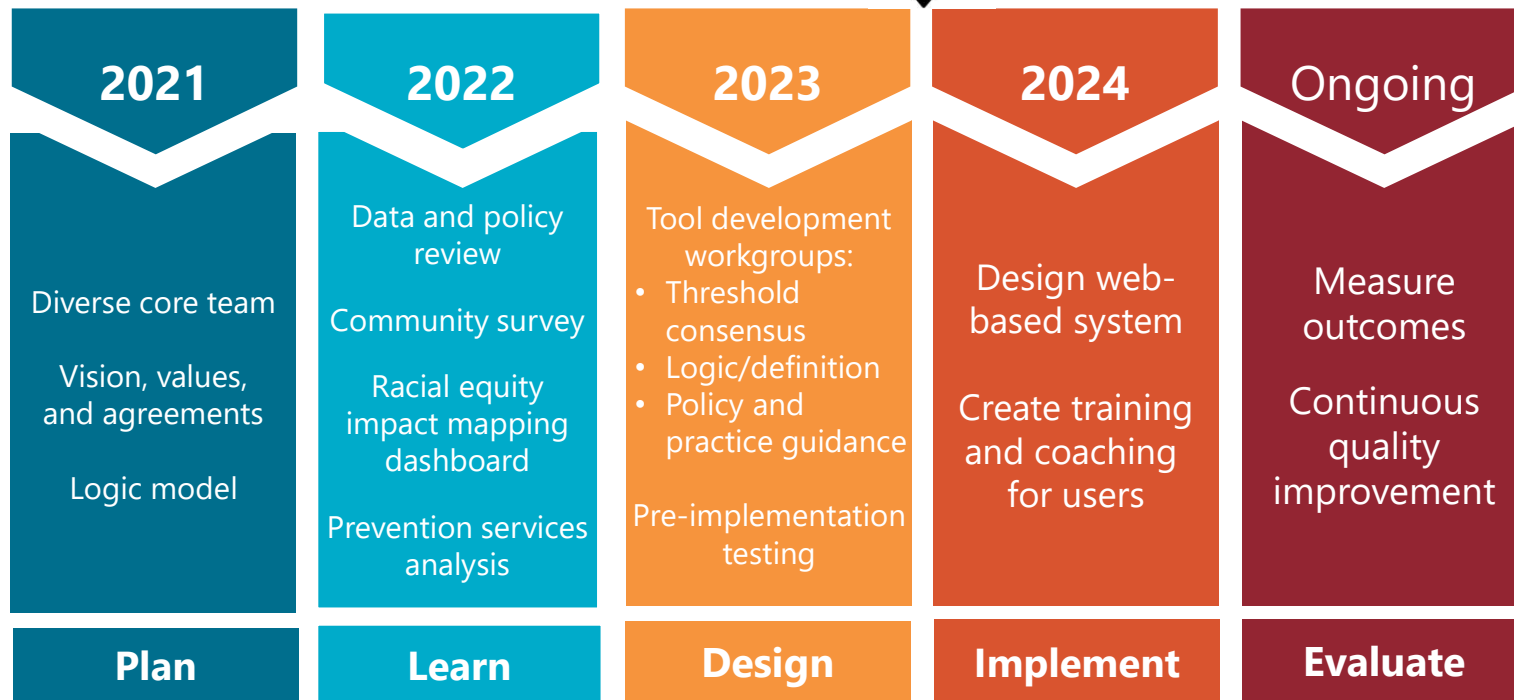
Connect with a local designated prevention provider to consult about supports for this family.

**No  
Report**



If appropriate, continue relationship with the child and family and provide support.

# PROJECT PHASES



12

## KEY FINDINGS



Testers expressed positive impressions about the tool



CRG was completed accurately; however; there was a gap between recommendations and actions



Use of the tool had positive influences on reporting behaviors



Use of CRG resulted in less-biased reporting decisions



Some decision trees need refinements

# WHAT IS IRR TESTING?

Inter-rater reliability (IRR) testing measures the extent to which different raters arrive at the same conclusion when presented with the same information.



# IRR TESTING CAN TELL US WHETHER THE TOOL IS WORKING AS INTENDED

## **Benefits of improved consistency**

- Objective, accurate assessment
- Consistent decision making
- More uniform recommendations for services

If there is high disagreement among testers, the tool may need to be revised to be effective.





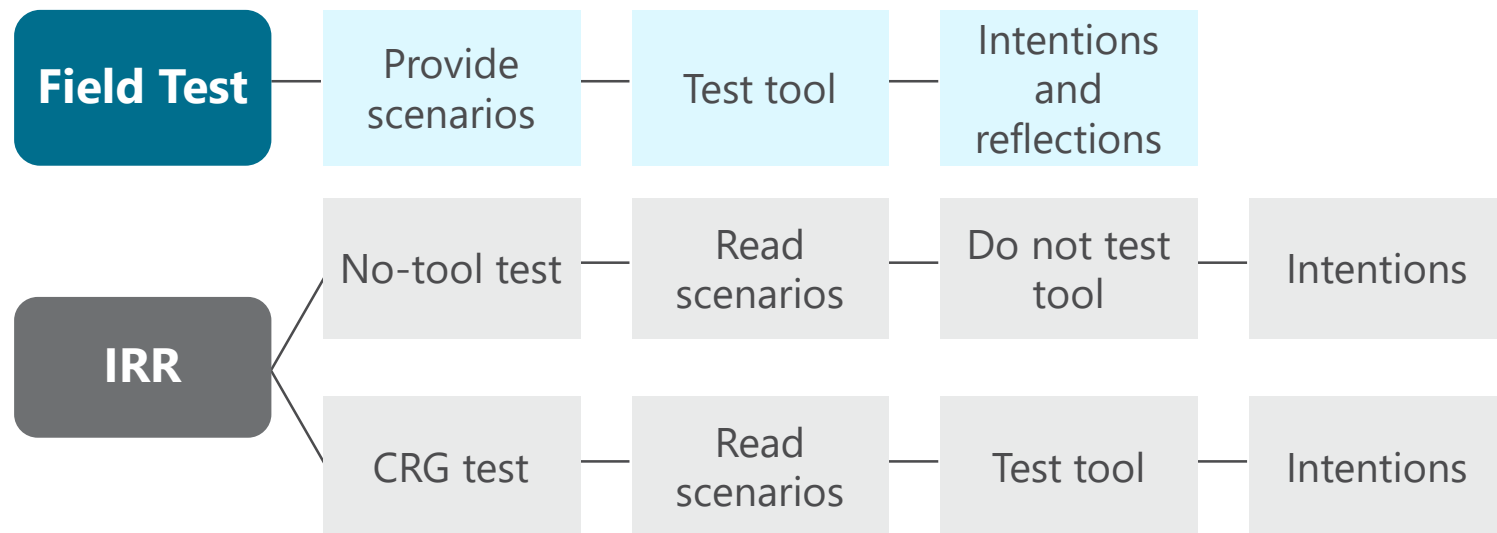
## WHAT IS FIELD TESTING?

Field testing checks how the tool performs in real-life scenarios, telling us how it applies to different concerns, situations, and reports in the field. It is an opportunity to “try on” the tool.

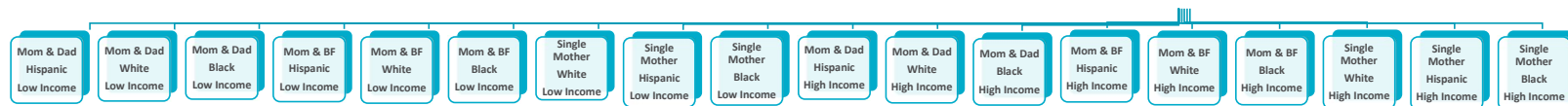
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# TESTING DESIGN



# SCENARIO EXPANSION



**6 to 18  
demographic  
headers**



**3 report  
recommendations**



Physical Harm

**16 trees**



**708 UNIQUE scenarios**

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# SURVEY WALKTHROUGH



# SURVEY WALKTHROUGH

## BASELINE

Family: Mother, mother's boyfriend, son (age 16), daughter (age 16), son (age 17)

Location: Berlin, NH

Race/Ethnicity: White

The mother's new boyfriend does not like her children because he believes they hold them back from living a better life. The boyfriend recently proposed to the mother and took her on a month-long vacation overseas to celebrate. The mother decided to leave the children on their own because she has no family in the country, and she does not get along with her neighbors.

She left the children with money for food and other basic needs. Every weekend while the mother was away, the children hosted parties with drugs and underage drinking. The children got drunk and missed school occasionally if they felt badly hungover. One of the twins' boyfriends has been sleeping over at home.

The children could not locate their mother after the vacation. They tried calling her, but she declined their calls.

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If you came across this situation and there was a community navigator available, what action would you most likely take?

- ☐ I would report this concern to child protection
- ☐ I would consult the community navigator
- ☐ I would neither report this concern to child protection nor consult the community navigator

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How confident would you feel in your decision?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Somewhat confident
- ☐ Not at all confident

# SURVEY WALKTHROUGH

## FIELD TEST

Is your concern current, or did it happen in the past? \*

☐ Current

☒ Past (please use this only if you have had no current worries related to potential child abuse or neglect during the field-testing period)

Briefly describe the concern that you will assess using the CRG. **Do not include identifying information for person(s) involved (e.g. names, birth dates, addresses, Social Security numbers).** Describe the concern, the roles of those involved and their relationships to one another, and how you learned about the concern. \*

Please select your concerns that apply.

- ☒ Concern about physical harm or threats of physical harm to a child by a caregiver
- ☐ Concern about housing or the physical living environment of a child
- ☐ Concern about a child's food or nutritional needs
- ☐ Concern about a child's hygiene
- ☐ Concern about a child's clothing
- ☐ Concern about a child's need for medical, vision, or dental care
- ☐ Concern about a child's need for mental health care OR a child is a danger to themselves or others
- ☐ Concern about caregiver's response to others causing harm to the child
- ☐ Concern about a child's school enrollment or attendance
- ☐ Concern about a child's supervision
- ☐ Concern about emotional harm to a child
- ☐ Concern about domestic violence
- ☐ Concern about a caregiver's mental health
- ☐ Concern about a caregiver's substance use
- ☐ Concern about the sexual abuse of a child
- ☐ Concern about the trafficking of a child (Sex or labor)

1. Does a child currently have an injury? \*

### Definitions

☒ a. Yes

☐ b. No

2. Does the injury seem accidental? \*

### Definitions

☐ a. No

☒ b. Yes

3. Is the injury suspicious, unusual, or a part of a pattern of injuries? \*

### Definitions

☐ a. Yes

☒ b. No

4. Are any of the following true?

- Child is under 2 years old.
- Child has a disability
- Child has a behavioral or mental health condition
- Caregiver has used a kind of discipline that can lead to injury or pain that persists.
- Caregiver has a known history of perpetrating child abuse or neglect.

### Definitions

☐ a. Yes

☒ b. No

## No Report Needed

A resource list will appear in the final tool.

# SURVEY WALKTHROUGH

## CRG TEST

Family: Mother, father, daughter (age 13)  
Location: Franklin, NH  
Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American

The reporter heard yelling coming from her neighbor's house and what she believed were the sounds of something breaking. The reporter stated that this hasn't happened before, but she was concerned, so she called police to respond. When the police visited the house, both parents were red-eyed, and a lamp was on the ground. They admitted to getting into an argument, and the lamp was knocked over when the father stormed out of the room. The parents stated that they had lost their tempers after a particularly stressful week and the father losing his job.

The family has a 13-year-old daughter, who was away at a school competition. The couple said they don't argue often and have never argued like this before. They also said they make sure not to argue when the daughter is present.

When the police talked with the teenage daughter, she said she has never witnessed verbal arguments or violence between her parents. She was at school at the time of the incident.

Please select your concerns that apply:

- ☐ Concern about physical harm or threats of physical harm to a child by a caregiver
- ☐ Concern about housing or the physical living environment of a child
- ☐ Concern about a child's food or nutritional needs
- ☐ Concern about a child's hygiene
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- ☐ Concern about a caregiver's mental health
- ☐ Concern about a caregiver's substance use
- ☐ Concern about the sexual abuse of a child
- ☐ Concern about the trafficking of a child (Sex or labor)

### CONCERN ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. Are any of the following occurring in the home?

- Domestic violence led to a serious caregiver injury, a child injury, or the death of a family member.
- A child witnessed serious violence between two adults in the home.
- A child attempted to intervene when there was domestic violence in the home.
- An adult used or is threatening to use a weapon to harm themselves or another person in the home.
- An adult is seriously verbally abusing, threatening or intimidating another person in front of a child?
- An adult is regularly undermining another adult in the home in front of a child?

#### Definitions

- ☐ a. Yes  
☒ b. No

2. Are any of the following true?

- There is an active restraining order on an adult and there are indications that the adult is threatening family members
- An adult is a known perpetrator of previous domestic violence, and there are indications that the adult is threatening
- An adult is regularly limiting access to finances as a means of controlling another adult.
- An adult is misusing systems as a means of controlling another adult.
- A child described a history of serious domestic violence where no current violence is occurring.
- A child is exhibiting behaviors or symptoms that are regularly seen in situations of domestic violence.
- An adult who previously had restricted access to the family is attempting to contact the family again.
- There are regular verbal arguments in the home that leave a child with fears about future violence.

#### Definitions

- ☒ a. Yes  
☐ b. No

## Consult



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**2**

# **PRE- IMPLEMENTATION TESTING RESULTS**

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# PRE-IMPLEMENTATION PARTICIPANTS

## CRG Testing



86 participants



16 scenarios

## No Tool Testing



58 participants



24 scenarios

## Field Testing



132 responses



1+ scenario

## KEY FINDINGS



Testers expressed positive impressions about the tool



CRG was completed accurately; however; there was a gap between recommendations and actions



Use of the CRG tool had positive influences on reporting behaviors



Use of CRG tool resulted in less-biased reporting decisions



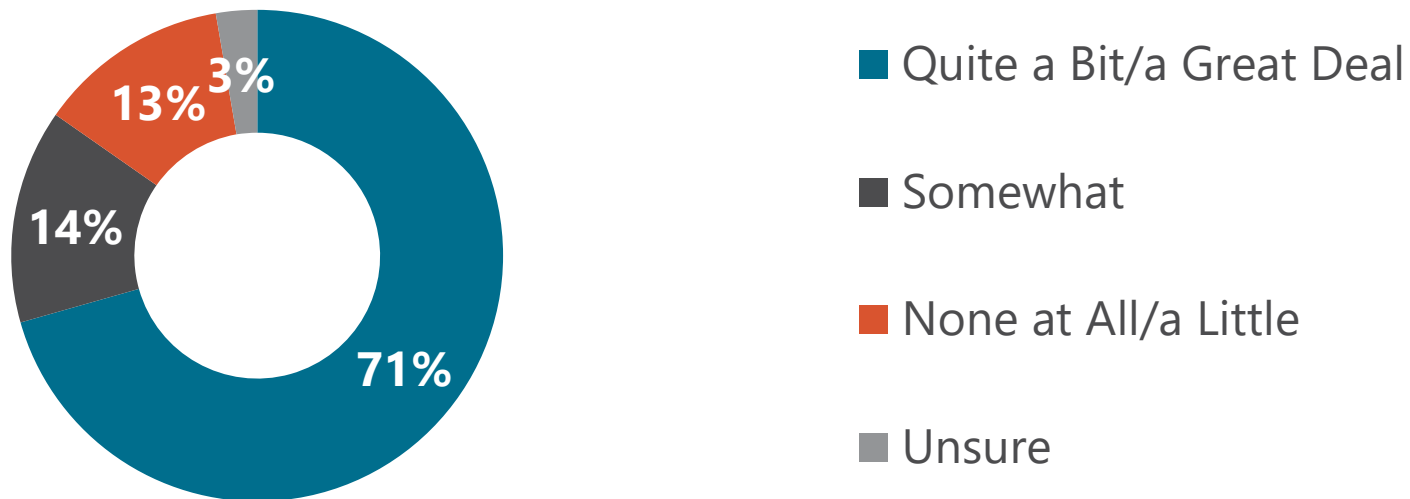
Some decision trees need refinements

**MOST TESTERS SHARED  
POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS  
OF THE TOOL**

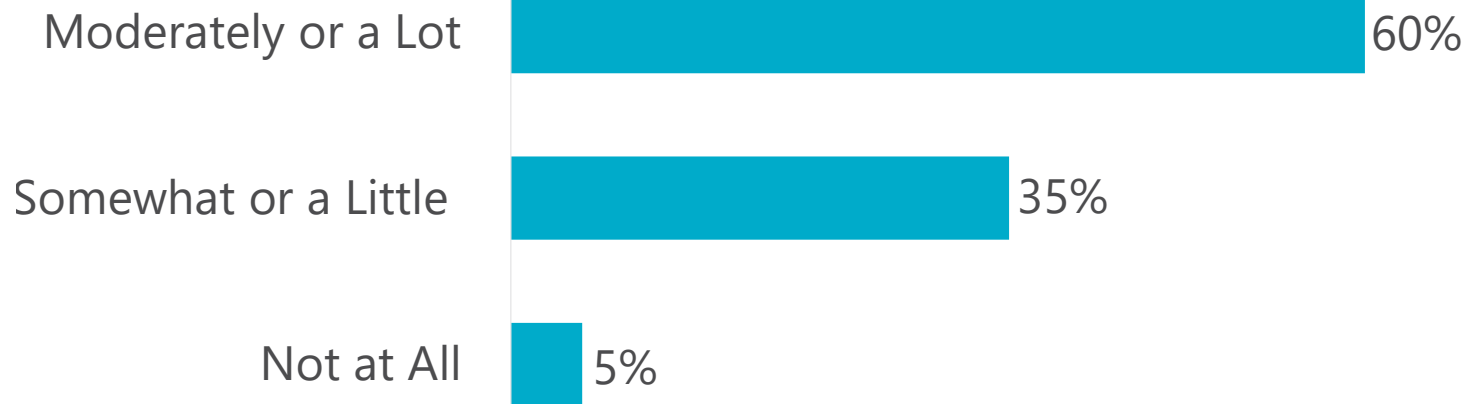
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## UTILITY OF RESPONSE GUIDE

If you were concerned about a child, how helpful would it be to have an interactive online guide walk you through the decision to report or refer to community resources for help? (N = 675)



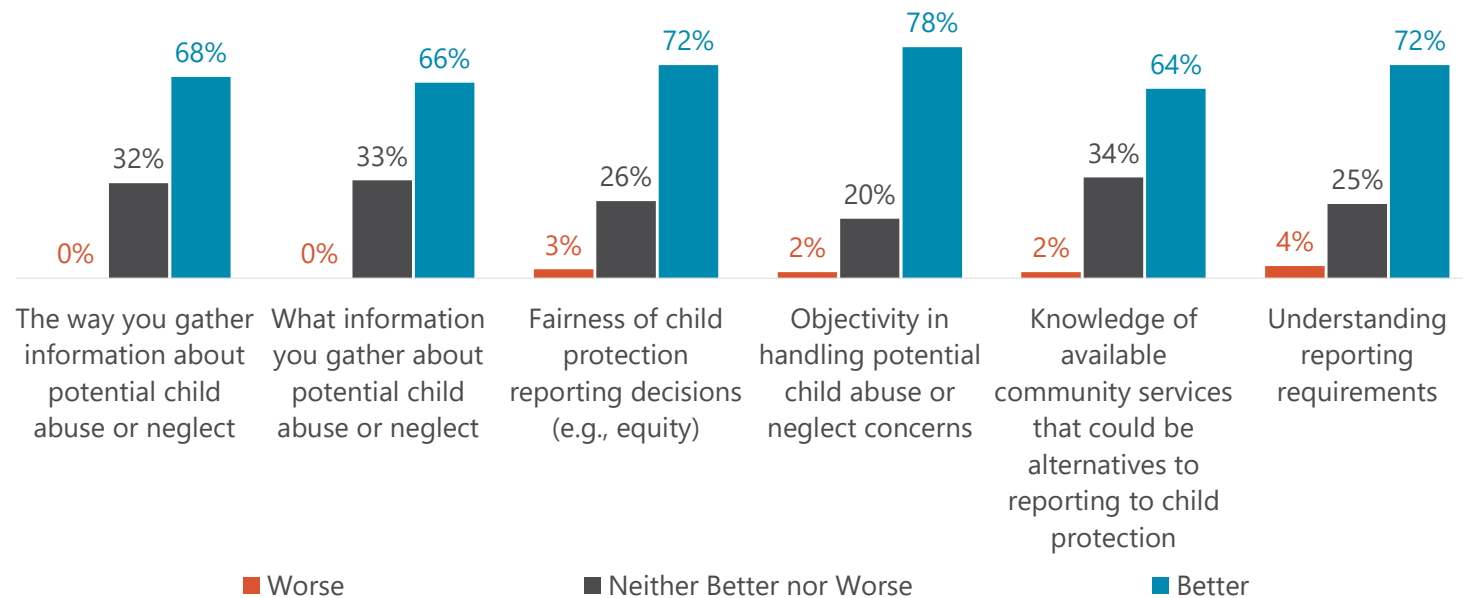
## MOST FIELD TESTERS BELIEVED THE TOOL HELPED THEM THINK THROUGH THE SITUATION AND MAKE A DECISION



N = 132

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## GENERALLY, FIELD TESTERS THOUGHT THE TOOL WOULD IMPROVE PROGRESS TOWARD KEY REPORTING GOALS



## POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS OF THE TOOL

*"This was incredibly helpful! I completely agreed with the suggestion made by the survey, and found it validating."*

*"I think this tool was very easily used and followed."*

*"Very helpful tool! Disturbing to see how many times it recommended 'report' and I chose 'would not report' if no community navigator was available. Shows that there is a great need for education in this area here."*

*"The definitions were needed and helpful. I was glad they were easily accessible."*

*"This is an amazing asset."*

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# SOME TESTERS RAISED CONCERNS

## The tool doesn't match the complexities of real life

*"We can't have a computer tell us to report or not. There is no way we can input sufficient facts. I think this assumes all CPS cases are similar, and they are not."*

## Testers believed too little or too much information was required

*"My concern is that there isn't enough information collected to make a realistic recommendation."*

*"The role that I am in ... I would not have a lot of these answers."*

## Some questions required a judgment or understanding of others' thoughts

*"The only real hang-up I have, which could severely impact supporting a child, was the question asking me if the parents withhold 'things' as a power play. I just don't know why people do what they do, especially if I'm not there."*

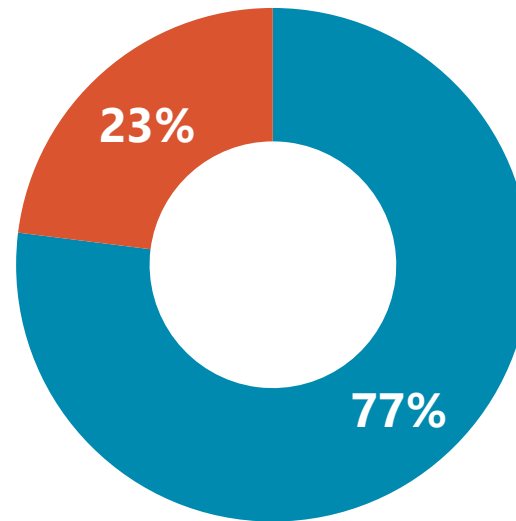
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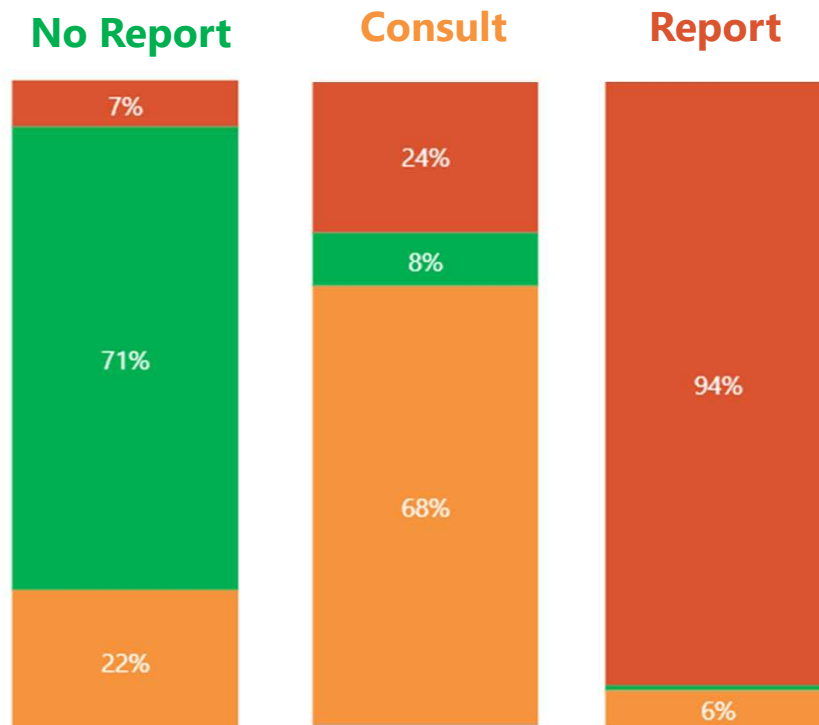
**Tool was completed accurately, but there is a gap between recommendations and intended actions**



**TOOL  
TESTERS  
REACHED  
THE CORRECT  
DECISION  
77% OF  
THE TIME**



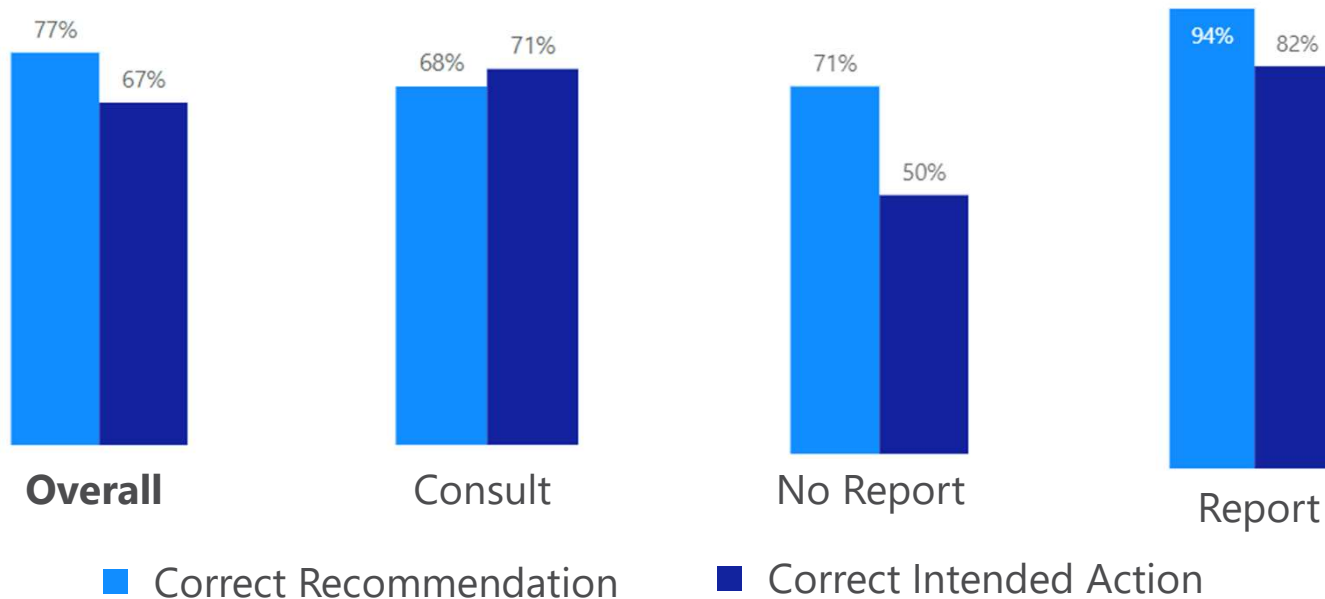
- Recommendation Matches Scenario
- Recommendation Does Not Match Scenario



**TESTERS  
WERE  
MOSTLY  
ACCURATE  
IN REPORT  
DECISIONS**

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## FEWER TESTERS SAID THEY WOULD TAKE THE CORRECT ACTION THAN ARRIVED AT IT



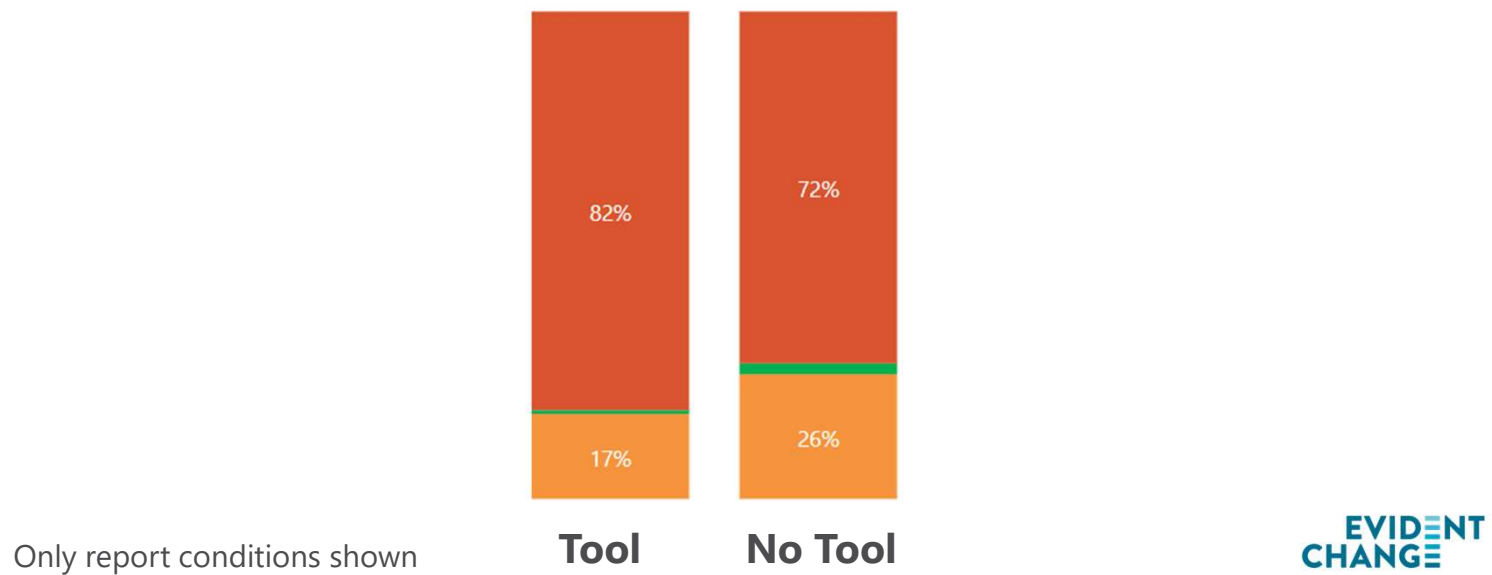


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# THE CRG SHOWED PROMISE FOR POSITIVE INFLUENCES ON REPORTING BEHAVIORS

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## MORE TESTERS INTENDED TO REPORT SCENARIOS CORRECTLY USING THE TOOL COMPARED WITH THE NO-TOOL GROUP



**THE CONSULT OPTION  
SHOWED PROMISE  
IN REDUCING  
OVERREPORTING  
IN “GRAY AREAS”**

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What Would You Do? With Consult



What Would You Do? No Consult



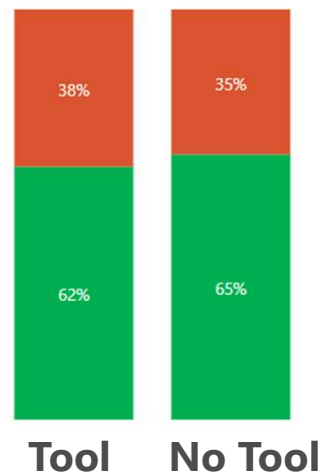
Only consult conditions shown

**WITH THE  
CONSULT  
OPTION, MOST  
GRAY AREAS  
WOULD BE  
ADDRESSED BY  
THE CONSULT  
RATHER THAN  
REPORTS**

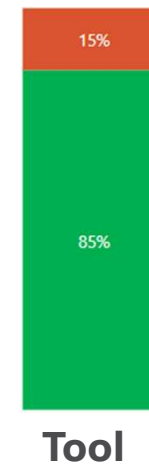
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## WHEN CONSULT AND NO-REPORT CONDITIONS ARE COMBINED, REDUCTION IN OVERREPORTING IS SHOWN

Intended Action By Condition - No Consult



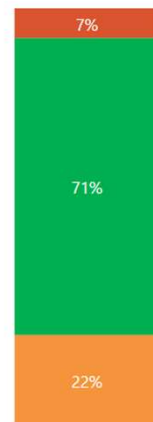
What the Tool Showed - Consult and No Report Combined



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# NO-REPORT SITUATIONS FREQUENTLY ELICITED A CONSULT DECISION

What the Tool Showed the CRG Testers



Only no-report conditions shown

Testers often wanted to use the consult option in no-report conditions

What Would You Do? With Consult



What Would You Do? No Consult



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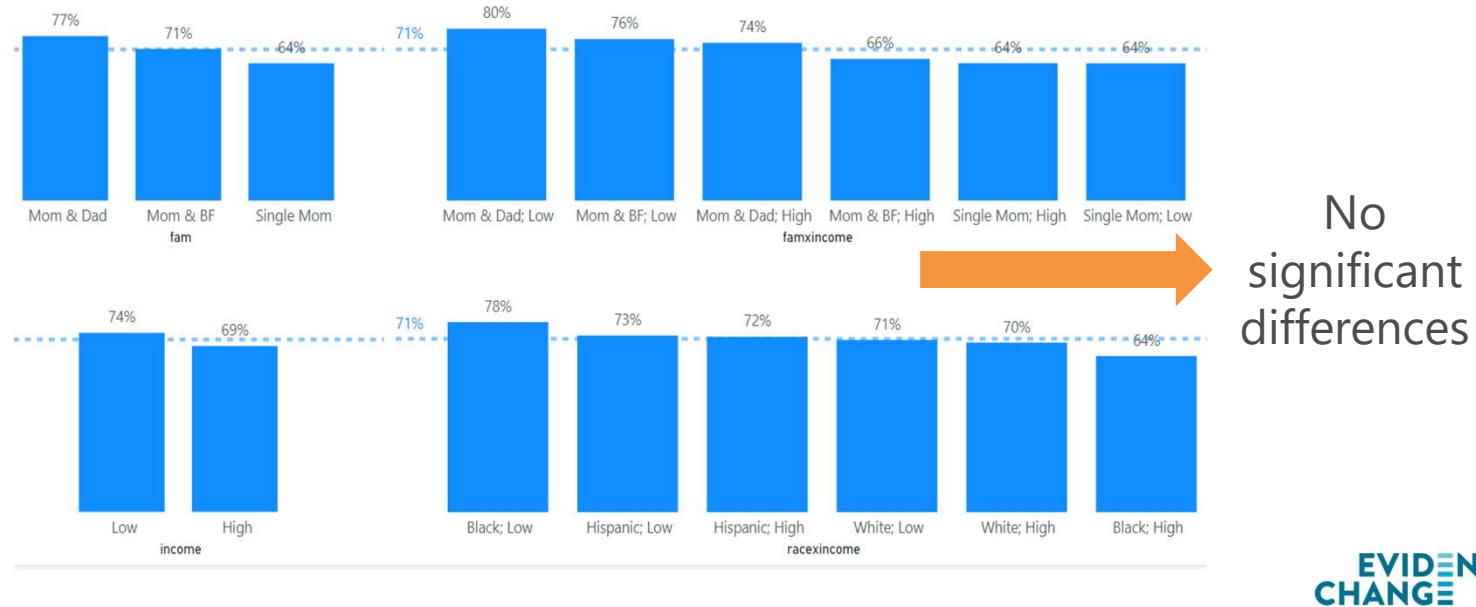
**WHAT IS ONE  
QUESTION OR  
OBSERVATION  
THAT YOU  
HAVE ABOUT  
THE DATA?**



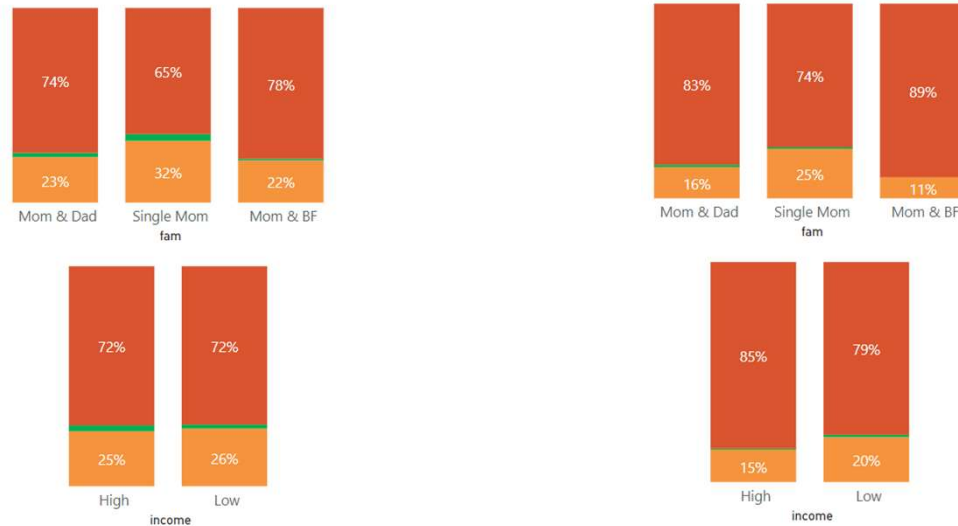
# CRG REDUCES BIAS IN REPORTING DECISIONS

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# BIAS WAS REDUCED IN THE CRG TEST FROM BASELINE



# BIAS WAS REDUCED IN THE CRG TEST FROM BASELINE



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**WHAT IS ONE  
QUESTION OR  
OBSERVATION  
THAT YOU  
HAVE ABOUT  
THE DATA?**



**SOME TREES NEED  
REFINEMENTS BEFORE  
IMPLEMENTATION**

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## FOR SOME CONCERNS, THE NO-TOOL GROUP TESTED MORE ACCURATELY THAN CRG TESTERS

CONCERN	CONDITION
Child mental health*	Consult
Domestic violence*	Consult, no report
Food*	Consult, no report
Medical, vision, dental	No report
Physical harm*	Consult, report
Sexual abuse*	No report

\*Overall accuracy above 65%

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## **AGREEMENT AMONG TREE ITEMS WAS LOWEST IN CONSULT CONDITIONS ACROSS TREES**

This makes sense, given that consult situations were more of a gray area by nature. So, values, biases, or experiences could influence answers more than other trees.

Agreement across items was highest among report conditions across trees, and certain trees showed lower agreement in the no-report condition.

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# ITEM ANALYSIS RESULTS SHOW CERTAIN TREES SHOULD BE ADJUSTED

**Six trees with at least three items with agreement below 65%**

- Trafficking
- Substance use
- Child mental health
- Medical, vision, dental
- Food
- Housing

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**3**

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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# TESTERS' RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOOL

## User Experience

- Make it impossible for the user to click an answer without seeing the definitions.
- Some responses could include an option for “unknown” so that children are not being asked the same question multiple times by multiple people about the alleged abuse.

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## TESTERS' RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOOL (CONTINUED)

### Definitions

- More information related to normal versus abnormal sexual development of a child might be beneficial. Add information to definitions about age-appropriate sexual development and behaviors.
- Add options about cultural norms impacting caregiver responses/actions.
- Add a question to identify whether the family previously was involved with CPS.
- Add questions for children with multiple homes/caregivers.
- Add questions specifically for older youth where a parent is responding appropriately, but the child is resisting.
- Build a full CRG/sub-trees for teens.

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## TESTERS' RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TOOL (CONTINUED)

### Guidance and Context

- Add a sentence or two in the introduction about the potential harms to families when people make unnecessary reports to child protection. This can create isolation and avoidance of needed services rather than the intended effect of helping.
- Use consult if you are unsure which concern type to select.
- Have Central Intake ask the caller if they have completed the tool.
- Add recommendations to always report if the child is in placement.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EVIDENT CHANGE

- **CRG tool enhancements:** Add context, adjust tool logic, upgrade and revise definitions for specific items.
- **Training and outreach:** Invest in robust training and communication aimed at building trust in tool action. Target areas of confusion in training.
- **Policy:** Endorse that reporters have met their mandate by using the CRG and making referrals to prevention services when indicated; aligns with national movement toward “mandated supporting.”



# TOOL ENHANCEMENT AND UPGRADE RECOMMENDATIONS

## Concern Selection

- Add an icon that provides definitions for each concern type.
- Consider removing response to harm concern—potentially secondary concern item.

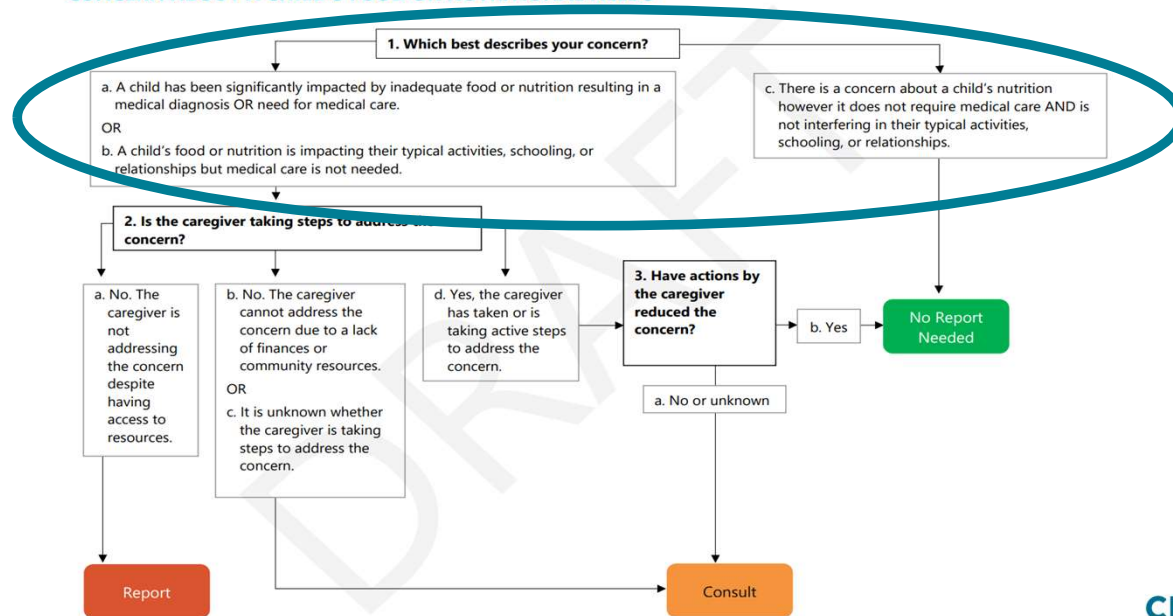
## Guidance

Define “infant,” “child,” and “youth” across the tool. Clarify that the tool is not for use with children in foster care.

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# SEVERITY SCALE

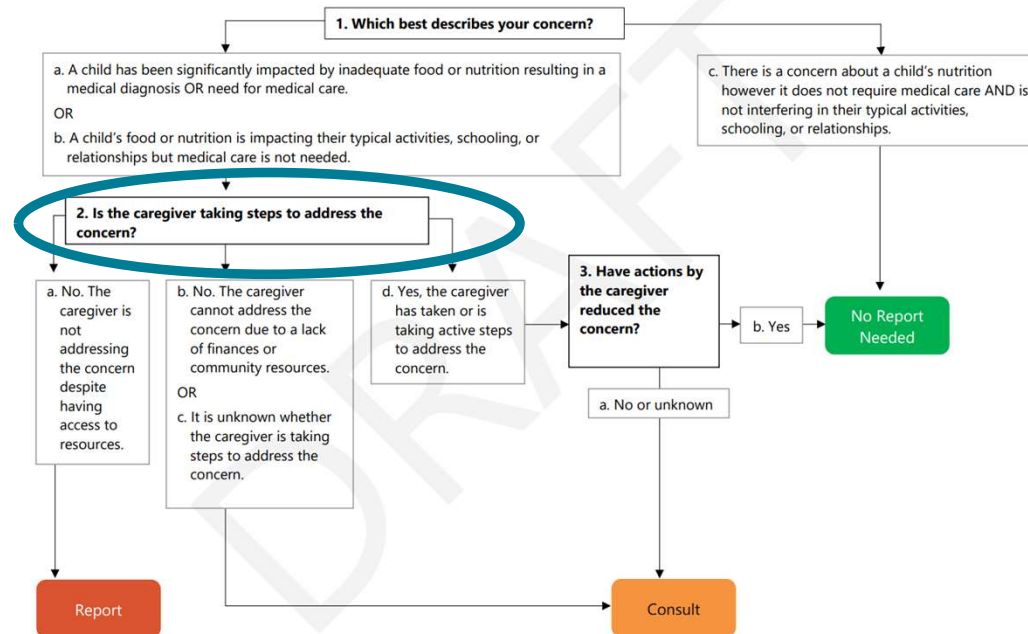
## CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD'S FOOD OR NUTRITIONAL NEEDS



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# SORTING QUESTIONS

## CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD'S FOOD OR NUTRITIONAL NEEDS



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## TOOL ENHANCEMENT AND UPGRADE RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

- Improve sorting questions to give more guidance to differentiate between “no report” and “consult.”
- In “Caregiver Steps” question, increase specificity between “no steps taken due to lack of resources” and “yes, taking steps.”
- Provide more examples of what steps can look like.
- Explore “harm reduction” question. Testers were confused about whether the concern had to be reduced versus eliminated.

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## TOOL ENHANCEMENT AND UPGRADE RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

- Fix overlapping themes in severity scale and sorting questions on physical abuse tree.
- Decide how to address historical concerns for specific concern types (domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse).
- Better definition for “occurring in the home.”
- Consider whether it makes sense to have a consult option for trafficking concerns.

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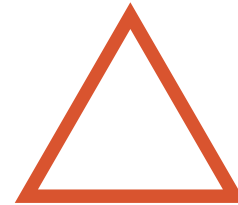
**4**

# **REFLECTIONS AND CLOSING**

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What was most  
helpful?



What could be  
upgraded for  
next time?



# THANK YOU & QUESTIONS

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Info@EvidentChange.org

