

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
ESPDT Functional Assessment Tools - CANS
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

BACKGROUND

From where did the mandate to complete the CANS-50 and PSC-35 originate?

On November 14, 2017, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) issued [MHSUDS Information Notice No.: 17-052 Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment \(EPSDT\) – Specialty Mental Health Services Performance Outcomes System Functional Assessment Tools for Children and Youth.](#)

- DHCS announced the selection of the Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC-35) AND the California Child and Adolescents Needs and Strengths - 50 (CANS-50) tools to measure child and youth functioning.

For the entire chronological history of CANS-related guidance from Sacramento, please reference the following:

- 1/25/18 [MHSUDS No. 18-007: Requirements for Implementing the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment Tool Within a Child and Family Team.](#)
- 7/2/18 [ACL #18-81: Requirements and Guidelines for Implementing the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment Tool Within a Child and Family Team \(CFT\) Process.](#)
- 7/9/18 [MHSUDS NO. 18-029: Clarification Regarding Sharing of CANS Assessments By County Placing Agencies And Mental Health Programs.](#)
- 10/17/18 [MHSUDS NO. 18-048 Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment \(EPSDT\) – Specialty Mental Health Services Performance Outcomes System Functional Assessment Tools For Children and Youth.](#)

What is the implementation timeline?

LACDMH and DHCS have agreed to the following implementation timeline for Los Angeles County:

- Starting January 1, 2019 the MHP's providers contracted to provide specialty mental health services (SMHS) to children/youth/non-minor dependents (NMDs) placed in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) began administering the CANS and PSC-35 to youth entering STRTPs;
- Effective April 1, 2019 the MHP's providers contracted to provide SMHS to children/youth/ NMDs placed in Foster Family Agency (FFA) Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) began administering the CANS and PSC-35 to youth receiving ISFC services;
- By July 1, 2019, all DMH contracted and directly operated programs will administer and report data collected using the PSC-35 and CANS for new clients under the age of 21 receiving SMHS.
- No later than August 1, 2019, LACDMH will send CANS and PSC-35 data received from SMHS providers to DHCS reflecting full implementation of EPSDT Functional Assessment Tools and engage in regular, recurring batch submissions.

REQUIREMENTS

Which version of the CANS are we supposed to complete?

- LACDMH and its contracted providers will be completing the California Integrated Practice CANS (CANS-IP), which includes the CANS-50 items mandated by DHCS, but also includes 12 additional trauma items and the option to collect information on additional caregivers (up to four total, whereas the CANS-50 only has space for info on one caregiver).
 - Note: CDSS is requiring Child Welfare to complete and report the CANS-IP. Additionally, CDSS has required the completion of an Early Childhood (EC) module for the birth to five population (46 items, plus the 12 trauma-related items). LACDMH will not be completing the EC module at this time.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
ESPDT Functional Assessment Tools - CANS
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What if our agency uses another version of the CANS already?

- As long as the version you are using contains the CANS-IP items, that is fine. However, you will need to have a way to report out ONLY the CANS-IP items to LACDMH.

For whom do these tools need to be completed?

- The CANS-IP is to be completed for all children/youth ages 6 through 20.
- The PSC-35 is to be completed on all EPSDT children ages 3 through 18.

How often are we required to complete these tools?

- These functional tools need to be completed at the beginning of treatment, every six months following the first administration, and at the end of treatment.
 - The CANS-IP also allows for updates to ratings and the urgent completion of an update should circumstance warrant this.
- “One child, one CANS”
 - It is the expectation that there should be **only one** CANS completed at each due date within the context of the Child and Family Team. DMH/Providers and DCFS should not each be completing separate and unrelated CANS tools for the same youth.

TRAINING

How will our staff be trained?

- To administer the CANS, one is required to be certified by a trainer who holds a current CANS training certificate and must also complete an annual re-certification.
- LACDMH has made training available on both the PSC-35 and the CANS (see more details below).

Who should we have trained?

- Because it is likely that the time spent gathering information to complete at least the CANS will be claimed as assessment, we are recommending that providers train those individuals on their staff who are eligible to claim for assessment services.

What are the details of the CANS training being offered?

- DMH in coordination with the Praed Foundation is able to provide the following trainings:
 - Full-day California CANS Training of Trainers; and Full-day General Transformational Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) and CANS Certification Training;
 - *Please note: If you decide to move forward with training your staff on the CANS outside of the DMH-sponsored trainings, please ensure the training meets the requirements to complete the CANS-50 as set forth by the Praed Foundation and DHCS and that you are trained by a certified trainer. The standardized training sign in sheet must be forwarded to Praed at support@tcomtraining.com within 48 hours of the training to receive codes to access the certification exam.*
- To access information about the CANS trainings, visit the website at:
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/for-providers/clinical-tools/training-workforce-development/cans/>

What are the details of the PSC-35 training being offered?

- The Outcomes team created a video to cover the basics of the PSC-35. It also addresses the different facets of information about the PSC-35. You can access the video here:
 - [PSC-35 Training Video](#)

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ESPDT Functional Assessment Tools - CANS
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What is Praed?

- Praed is a public charitable foundation through which CANS certification is obtained.

Who should complete (administer) the CANS?

- Any practitioner eligible to complete an assessment who is also certified by Praed to administer the CANS. The initial CANS should be completed by a clinician conducting the initial assessment.

Can my agency host an agency-specific CANS training?

- No, we are unable to offer agency-specific CANS trainings at this time.

DMH Staff ONLY: How do I code attending CANS trainings on my timecard?

- When coding the CANS training and certification time on your timecard, use code **037**. In the **Project** field, enter **CANS**. For additional questions, please consult your direct supervisor.

What are the different CANS courses?

- 1) CANS Overview (Overview), and 2) CANS Training of Trainers (TOT)

Are there different levels of CANS Certification?

- Yes, there are 2 levels of CANS certification. You can be certified to 1) **administer** the CANS or 2) **train** your agency staff to administer the CANS.

How do I get certified to administer the CANS?

- Complete the online CANS course or attend an in-person Overview conducted by Praed training staff, **or** be trained in-person by your agency's certified CANS trainer, **AND** 2) attain a score of **0.70** or higher on the CANS certification test.

I'm currently certified to administer the CANS. Do I need to attend the Overview?

- No.

I'm certified to administer the CANS and want to become certified as a trainer. Do I need to attend the Overview?

- Only if you have not taken a live, in-person Overview training.

What are the prerequisites for attending a TOT?

- Attend the in-person Overview conducted by Praed training staff.

How do I get certified as a CANS trainer?

- Complete a live, in-person Overview training in order to attend the TOT; 2) attend the TOT in-person training conducted by a Praed trainer; 3) submit training materials to Praed for approval; and 4) attain a score of 0.80 or higher on the CANS certification test.

I'm certified in another county. Do I need to take the certification test for Los Angeles County?

- No. Any CANS certification obtained through Praed is transferable to LA County. However, when you recertify with the CANS, you will need to register with Praed under LA County and take the LA County version of the online CANS training.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
ESPDT Functional Assessment Tools - CANS
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How soon do I need to take the certification test after attending an Overview training?

- You have 1 year to take the certification test. However, best practice recommendation by Praed is to take the test within 48 hours after completing the in-person training.

What other available resources are there to assist with CANS certification?

- TCOM Needs and Strengths Flowchart provides a decision tree in determining how to rate the needs and strengths for a client on the CANS. The flowchart can be accessed here:
https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dmh/1141464_CANSNeedsandStrengthsFlowchart.pdf

COUPON CODES

What are the coupon codes? Coupon codes allow access to the Praed website for 1 year.

How is a coupon code obtained? The way you obtain a coupon code depends on how you were trained. 1) If you attend the in-person Overview training, a coupon code is provided to attendees at the conclusion of the training. 2) If you take the online course, you will have already been given the coupon code and will then have access to not only the training but the certification exam. 3) If you are trained by your agency's in-house certified CANS trainer, your agency's trainer will submit the roster/sign in sheet to Praed, and Praed will issue codes to that trainer for distribution to use in accessing the certification exam. It is the responsibility of your agency's trainer to submit the sign in sheet to Praed within 48 hours at support@tcomtraining.com in order to receive the coupon codes.

Will my agency be charged a fee for the coupon codes? No, DMH is currently covering the cost of the coupon codes.

I'm having trouble registering on the CANS website using the coupon code. What do I do? Contact the CANS staff at support@tcomtraining.com.

How long is the coupon code active? The coupon code is active for 30 days after it is issued.

RE-CERTIFICATION

After I become certified (either to administer the CANS or as a trainer), do I ever need to update my certification? Yes, you must be re-certified by Praed and pass the certification test every 12 months.

What other available resources are there to assist with CANS recertification?

- The CANS recertification tip sheet provides helpful tips on how to navigate through the CANS recertification process. The tip sheet can be accessed here:
https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dmh/1160153_CANSRecertificationTipSheetrevised4.25.24.pdf
- TCOM Needs and Strengths Flowchart provides a decision tree in determining how to rate the needs and strengths for a client on the CANS. The flowchart can be accessed here:
https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/dmh/1141464_CANSNeedsandStrengthsFlowchart.pdf

CONTACT INFORMATION

- support@tcomtraining.com For questions about registering with the coupon code on the Praed website or any issues with your Praed account.
- coaching@TCOMTraining.com For support for passing the certification exam.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
ESPDT Functional Assessment Tools - CANS
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- MHSAWET@dmh.lacounty.gov For questions related to the Overview or Training of Trainers CANS courses offered after July 1, 2019.
- PEIOutcomes@dmh.lacounty.gov For questions related to CANS and PSC administration requirements.

DATA SUBMISSION

How will we be expected to submit the data to DMH?

- CANS-IP and PSC-35 data can be collected in a provider's electronic health record (EHRS) and can be submitted to DMH through webservice
OR
- Providers may submit their CANS-IP and PSC-35 data by entering it directly into the Early and Periodic Screening and Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Outcome Measures web-based application.
- The technical requirements for webservice can be accessed here:
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/pc/cp/epsdt/>
- The web-based application can be accessed here:
<https://dmhepsdt.dynamics365portals.us/>
- Information about gaining access to the web-based application can be accessed here:
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/outcomes/applications/>