

# Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro-ACT)

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## Forms

This file references the following forms:

- 06-06 Special Incident Report (SIR) Facesheet
- 06-07 SIR Narrative
- 06-09 SIR Restraint Addendum
- 06-10 SIR Special Procedures

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## Introduction

The Community Care Licensing division of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) requires all children's residential programs to have an Emergency Intervention Plan in place to "prevent a child who exhibits assaultive behavior from injuring or endangering" (Title 22 Subchapter 3) themselves and others.

The Professional Assault Crisis Training (Pro-ACT) is Polinsky Children's Center's (PCC) Emergency Intervention Plan.

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## Background

Programs to manage assault response were initially developed in 1975 by Paul A. Smith, Ph.D., evolving in 2004 into what it now known as Pro-ACT. The Pro-ACT workshop provides PCC residential care staff with the use and understanding of the following foundational principles:

- Approach: Pro-ACT as an approach to safety rather than specific techniques
- Problem Solving: Help trainees identify the right questions to ask so trainees can solve problems for themselves
- Emergency Response: Pro-ACT methods are not substitutes for primary plans
- Individual Differences: Build confidence in professionals regardless of individual abilities or gender
- Teamwork: Emphasizes team skills, not individual skills
- Rights: Enhance personal safety in the context of individual rights

Pro-ACT includes the use of the following responses:

- Crisis communication – verbal and nonverbal communication to continue to reduce the chance of escalation
  - Evasion – avoid or minimize physical contact
  - Manual restraint – as a last resort, restrict voluntary movement by physically holding the child (e.g., escort, escort position, prone, seated, standing, supine, and wall)
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**Policy**

The following permanent job classifications at PCC are required to complete the initial Pro-ACT training within the first 90 days of employment:

- Residential Care Worker
- Residential Child Care Specialist
- Residential Care Worker Supervisor
- Social Work Supervisor (also serves as PCC Duty Officer)
- Protective Services Supervisor (also serves as PCC Duty Officer)

Pro-ACT responses are applied when PCC's primary plan of interventions (e.g., Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA), crisis intervention, and use of mental health clinicians or other support programs) have been utilized but are ineffective in managing the child's behavior(s) and there remains an immediate threat of injury to the child and/or others.

When a manual restraint is used on a child, staff participating will ensure that the focus is on safe, quality, and trauma-informed services for the child and will complete the following procedures:

- Debrief the incident with the child and encourage the child to take the lead in integrating themselves back into their peer group with support from a trusted staff or a mental health clinician
- Debrief with a Supervisor to evaluate performance to inform practice modifications to the child's intervention as needed – see Staff Debrief and Evaluation section below for additional information
- Complete Special Incident Reports prior to the end of the shift including forms 06-06, 06-07, 06-09, and 06-10

During a manual restraint, the Duty Officer will be tasked with assessing and managing the emergency situation and will serve as the point of contact when other residential staff cannot be reached.

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**Training and  
Annual  
Refresher**

Residential care staff are required to complete the initial 20-hour Pro-ACT training and certification, which is comprised of a 16-hour basic workshop and a 4-hour restraint workshop. Once completed, the manual restraint certification remains valid and does not require annual re-certification for as long as the staff continues to work at PCC.

Staff are prohibited from utilizing manual restraints on children without completing a restraint certification from the initial training.

Staff are also required to complete the annual 10-hour Pro-ACT Refresher, which is comprised of an 8-hour basic refresher and a 2-hour restraint refresher. The refreshers allow staff the opportunity to continue to evaluate their own performance and improve their approach and skills to safely intervene during a crisis situation.

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**Training and  
Annual  
Refresher (cont.)**

Training hours earned from both initial and refresher trainings will be included towards the mandatory 20-hour annual training requirement for all residential care staff.

PCC staff designated as certified Pro-ACT trainers are required to train a minimum of 40 hours annually and provide documentation of the courses and evaluations to the Pro-ACT Headquarters.

**NOTE:** Staff must receive training and certification from a Pro-ACT certified trainer at PCC. Previous training and certification received from another agency is considered invalid.

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**Staff Evaluation**

The Pro-ACT Manual encourages staff to “engage in a regular practice of self-evaluation for improved performance” in order to create a safer environment for all children and staff at PCC.

The following standards will be used to evaluate staff performance:

Level	Description
Below Standard	A below standard rating indicates performance at a level risking harm for clients and/or employees. This level of performance is unprofessional, unacceptable, and does not reflect application of the principles of training provided.
Beginner (Minimum Standard)	The beginner rating represents the performance one could expect from an adequately trained but inexperienced staff member. A first-year employee might be expected to perform in a tentative and over-cautious manner. The minimum expectation is to do no harm. Employees at this level require close supervision and frequent coaching.
Intermediate	The intermediate rating represents the performance of properly trained employees with some relevant experience. Employees performing at the intermediate level reflect consistent application of training principles but still require intermittent supervision and periodic reminders.
Competent	The competent rating represents consistent professional performance with routine supervision. These employees do not usually require guidance or coaching from supervisors when intervening in assault crises.

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**Staff Evaluation  
(cont.)**

Proficient	The proficient rating represents the performance of advanced professionals who can serve as role models and mentors for other, less experienced, employees. These employees tend to monitor themselves and correct their own infrequent performance mistakes.
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Staff performing at Below Standard on any portion of the training cannot be certified. The Pro-ACT trainer will provide one on one coaching to help the staff achieve the minimum standard of Beginner in order to be certified.

All staff involved in the manual restraint will verbally debrief after each manual restraint to evaluate their own performance. If a Below Standard performance occurs during a restraint, the staff's direct Supervisor must be informed and will note the next steps in the Follow-Up Actions (For RCS, DO, and SIR QA) section of the 06-06 form. The Supervisor will hold supervision meetings with the staff in order to coach them that includes a review of the proper Pro-ACT principles, a plan for practicing techniques, coaching, and a follow up evaluation. If the staff is unable to achieve a Beginner standard after a reasonably adequate amount of coaching, the staff will lose their restraint certification and will not be allowed to perform restraints on campus.

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**Alignment with  
SET**

This policy aligns with [Value 6](#) and the guiding principle of ongoing learning and professional development that include respectful mentoring and coaching relationships, and the Agency practice of utilizing a teamwork approach to ensure the safety of all children and staff at PCC.

It also supports [Value 3](#) and the guiding principle to have a continual focus on children's well-being by ensuring that there are a variety of methods to keep them safe from harming themselves or others while in the care of PCC.

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