§ 397. Powers and duties of social services officials in relation to children. All social services officials responsible for the administration of safety net assistance to families shall, in relation to all children in such families other than delinquent children, persons in need of supervision, mentally disabled children, physically handicapped children and children born out of wedlock who shall be cared for under the provisions of the following section, have powers and perform duties as follows:

1. As to destitute children:

(a) Investigate the family circumstances of each child reported as destitute in order to determine what care, supervision or treatment, if any, such child requires.

(b) Administer and supervise relief to families with destitute children when such families are unable to care for such children and relief is necessary to prevent the separation of children from their parents.

(c) Furnish children, whose parents or guardians are unable to do so, with suitable clothing, shoes, books, food and other necessaries to enable them to attend upon instruction as required by law.

2. As to neglected and abused children:

(a) Investigate complaints of neglect and abuse of children and offer protective social services to prevent injury to the child, to safeguard his welfare, and to preserve and stabilize family life wherever possible.

(b) Bring such case when necessary before the family court for adjudication.

(c) Institute proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction against a parent or adult for neglect or abuse of a child.

3. Provide any necessary medical or hospital care for such children when responsible for the provision of such care under section sixty-nine.

4. The provisions of this section shall not be deemed to confer on social services officials responsible only for the authorization of

safety net assistance or of safety net assistance and hospital care, any powers and duties in relation to destitute and neglected children except as follows:

(a) As to destitute children:

(1) Authorize relief to families with destitute children when such families are unable to care for such children and relief is necessary to prevent the separation of children from their parents.

(2) Furnish children, whose parents or guardians are unable to do so, with suitable clothing, shoes, books, food and other necessaries to enable them to attend upon instruction as required by law.

(b) As to neglected and abused children:

Report to the county commissioner any complaint they may receive of neglect and abuse of children.

(c) Provide any necessary medical care or hospital care for such children when responsible for the provision of such care under section sixty-nine.