

5101:2-36-03

**PCSA requirements for intra-familial child abuse and/or neglect assessment/investigations.**

(A) When the public children services agency (PCSA) screens in an intra-familial child abuse and/or neglect report, the PCSA shall determine the immediacy of need for agency response to ensure the child's safety, based on information from the following sources:

(1) The referent/reporter.

(2) Child protective services records regarding the principals of the report.

(B) An intra-familial assessment/investigation may require a third party assessment/investigation when a principal named in the report poses a conflict of interest for the PCSA pursuant to rule 5101:2-36-08 of the Administrative Code.

(C) The PCSA may request the assistance of law enforcement during an assessment/investigation when one or more of the following situations exist and the reason for contacting law enforcement is documented in the case record:

(1) The agency has reason to believe that the child is in immediate danger of serious harm.

(2) The agency has reason to believe that the worker is, or will be, in danger of harm.

(3) The agency has reason to believe that a crime is being committed, or has been committed against a child.

(4) The assistance of law enforcement needs to be invoked in accordance with the county child abuse and neglect memorandum of understanding.

(D) The PCSA shall consider the report an emergency when the PCSA determines that there is an immediate threat of serious harm to the child or there is insufficient information to determine whether or not the child is safe at the time the referral is screened in by the PCSA.

(E) Upon acceptance of a child abuse and/or neglect report, the PCSA shall initiate the report in accordance with the following:

(1) For an emergency report, attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim within one hour from the time the referral was screened in, to assess child safety and interview the alleged child victim.

(2) For all other reports, attempt a face-to-face or telephone contact within twenty-four hours from the time the referral was screened in, with a principal of the report or collateral source, excluding the referent, who has knowledge of the alleged child victim's current condition, and can provide information

about the child's safety.

(a) If the twenty-four hour attempt was not an attempted face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim, a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim shall be made within seventy-two hours from the time the referral was screened in to assess child safety and interview the alleged child victim.

(F) When the PCSA has attempted to make face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim and at a minimum one parent, guardian, or custodian and one or more of the parties was unavailable, the PCSA shall attempt at least one additional face-to-face contact within the first four working days from the date that the referral was screened in as a child abuse and/or neglect report, in order to complete the JFS 01401 "Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model - I.S., Safety Assessment" (rev. 2/2006) pursuant to rule 5101:2-37-01 of the Administrative Code.

(G) The PCSA shall document in the case record the date, time, and with whom the assessment/investigation was initiated.

(H) For all intra-familial child abuse and/or neglect reports the PCSA shall complete the JFS 01401 pursuant to rule 5101:2-37-01 of the Administrative Code within four working days from the date that the referral was screened in as a child abuse and/or neglect report.

(I) If the attempted face-to-face contacts with the alleged child victim, as specified in paragraphs (E) and (F) of this rule are unsuccessful, the PCSA shall, at a minimum, continue making attempts for face-to-face contact at least every five working days until the child is seen or until the PCSA is required to make a report disposition pursuant to paragraph (W) of this rule.

(J) The PCSA shall not interview the alleged child victim without parental consent, unless one of the following exigent circumstances exists:

(1) There is credible information indicating the child is in immediate danger of serious harm.

(2) There is credible information indicating that the child will be in immediate danger of serious harm upon return home from school or other locations away from their home.

(3) There is credible information indicating that the child may be intimidated from discussing the alleged abuse or neglect in their home.

(4) The child requests to be interviewed at school or another location due to one of the circumstances listed above.

(K) The PCSA shall not interview the siblings of an alleged child victim, who themselves

were not named as alleged child victims, at school or other locations away from their home, without parental consent or the existence of exigent circumstances as outlined in paragraph (J) of this rule. Should an alleged child victim provide information during an interview that indicates a sibling might be in immediate danger of serious harm or that the sibling could provide information regarding immediate danger of serious harm to the alleged child victim, the interview of the sibling who was not identified as an alleged child victim may commence.

(L) If an alleged child victim is interviewed without parental consent, then the same day, the PCSA shall attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim's parent, guardian, or custodian to inform them that an interview of their child occurred.

(M) The specific facts necessitating that assessment/investigative interviews of a child be conducted without parental consent must be documented in the case record.

(N) For any report alleging that an infant has been born and identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, the PCSA shall assess safety pursuant to rule 5101:2-37-01 of the Administrative Code and risk pursuant to rule 5101:2-37-03 of the Administrative Code and develop a plan of safe care as needed.

(O) The PCSA shall conduct and document face-to-face interviews with each child residing within the home of the alleged child victim. When possible each child should be interviewed separately and apart from the alleged perpetrator. The purpose of the interviews is to:

(1) Evaluate each child's condition.

(2) Determine if the child is safe.

(3) Obtain each child's explanation regarding the allegations contained in the report.

(P) The PCSA need not interview a child if it is determined that:

(1) The child does not have sufficient verbal skills.

(2) Additional interviewing would be detrimental, unless requested by the lead PCSA pursuant to paragraph (CC) or (DD) of this rule.

(Q) When the PCSA does not interview a child residing in the home, the PCSA shall document the justification in the case record pursuant to rule 5101:2-36-11 of the Administrative Code.

(R) The PCSA shall conduct and document face-to-face interviews with the alleged perpetrator and all adults residing in the home of the alleged child victim, unless law enforcement or the county prosecutor will interview the alleged perpetrator pursuant to the procedures delineated in the county child abuse and neglect

memorandum of understanding, in order to:

- (1) Assess their knowledge of the allegation.
  - (2) Observe the interaction between the alleged child victim and caretaker.
  - (3) Obtain relevant information regarding child safety and risk to the child.
- (S) The PCSA shall advise the alleged perpetrator of the specific complaints or allegations made against him or her at the time of the initial contact with the person. The initial contact between the PCSA and the alleged perpetrator of the report includes the first face-to-face or telephone contact, whichever occurs first, when information is gathered as part of the assessment/investigation process.
- (T) The PCSA shall conduct and document face-to-face or telephone interviews with any person identified as a possible source of information during the assessment/investigation to obtain relevant information regarding the safety of and risk to the child. The PCSA shall exercise discretion in the selection of collateral sources to protect the family's right to privacy. To protect the confidentiality of the principals of the case, persons shall not be randomly interviewed.
- (U) The PCSA shall take any other actions necessary to assess safety and risk to the child. These actions may include, but are not limited to:
- (1) Taking photographs of areas of trauma on the child's body.
  - (2) Taking photographs of the child's environment with the parent, guardian, or custodian's consent.
  - (3) Securing a medical examination or psychological evaluation or both of the child with consent of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or with a court order.
  - (4) Securing any relevant records, including but not limited to school, mental health, and medical records.
- (V) At any time the PCSA determines a child to be in immediate danger of serious harm, the PCSA shall follow procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-37-02 of the Administrative Code.
- (W) The PCSA shall complete the report disposition and arrive at a final case decision by completing the JFS 01400 "Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model - I.S., Family Assessment" (rev. 2/2006) no later than thirty days from the date the PCSA screened in the referral as a child abuse and/or neglect report. The PCSA may extend the time frame by a maximum of fifteen days when information needed to determine the report disposition and final case decision cannot be obtained within thirty days and the reasons are documented in the case record pursuant to rule

5101:2-36-11 of the Administrative Code.

(X) When the child abuse and/or neglect report involves a principal of the report who is currently receiving ongoing protective services from the PCSA, the PCSA shall complete the report disposition by completing the JFS 01402 "Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model - I.S., Ongoing Case Assessment/Investigation" (rev. 2/2006). The JFS 01402 shall be completed no later than thirty days from the date the PCSA screened in the referral as a child abuse and/or neglect report. The PCSA may extend the time frame by a maximum of fifteen days when information needed to determine the report disposition cannot be obtained within thirty days and the reasons are documented in the case record pursuant to rule 5101:2-36-11 of the Administrative Code.

(Y) The PCSA shall request assistance from the county prosecutor, the PCSA's legal counsel, and/or the court when refused access to the alleged child victim or any records necessary to conduct the assessment/investigation.

(Z) The PCSA shall have an interpreter present for all interviews when the PCSA has determined that a principal of the report has a language or any other impairment that causes a barrier in communication, e.g., deaf or hearing impaired, limited English proficiency or is developmentally delayed.

(AA) Within two working days of completion of the assessment/investigation, the PCSA shall do all of the following:

(1) Notify the child, unless the child is not of an age or developmental capacity to understand; and the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the report disposition and final case decision.

(2) Notify the alleged perpetrator in writing of the report disposition; and their right to appeal, and the method by which they may appeal as outlined in rule 5101:2-33-20 of the Administrative Code.

(3) Refer any child under the age of three who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to "Help Me Grow" for early intervention services.

(4) Refer any infant who has been born and identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure to "Help Me Grow."

(5) As appropriate, refer any child determined not to be at risk of imminent harm for services pursuant to procedures established in rule 5101:2-40-02 of the Administrative Code.

(6) Document in the case record, the date and method of notification.

(BB) The PCSA located within the county in which the child's parent, guardian, or

custodian resides shall lead assessment/investigation efforts when two or more Ohio PCSAs are involved. In situations of joint custody or shared parenting, the PCSA in the county in which the child's residential parent resides at the time of the report shall lead the assessment/investigation efforts.

(CC) If a report of child abuse and neglect involves a child who is living in a shelter for victims of domestic violence or a homeless shelter, the PCSA that received the report shall do one of the following:

(1) Determine if the child was brought to the shelter pursuant to an agreement with a shelter in another county. If a determination is made that there was an agreement in place, the PCSA from the county from which the child was brought shall lead the assessment/investigation and provide the required supportive services or petition the court for custody of the child, if necessary.

(2) Lead the assessment/investigation when a determination was made that the child was not brought to the shelter under an agreement with a shelter in another county. When two or more PCSAs are involved, all PCSAs shall be responsible for following procedures outlined in this rule.

(3) Commence the assessment/investigation if a determination cannot be made immediately if an agreement is in effect. The PCSA shall continue to determine if an agreement is in effect and follow procedures outlined in this rule.

(DD) When requested by the lead PCSA, either verbally or in writing, the non-lead PCSA shall conduct interviews of any principals of the report and collateral sources presently located within its jurisdiction and assist in the completion of the JFS 01401 and/or JFS 01400 within a time frame that will allow the lead PCSA to meet the time frames outlined in this rule. All PCSAs involved shall document the request in the case record.

(EE) The Ohio PCSA shall cooperate with the children services agency, including when necessary, leading investigative efforts when the child is located within Ohio or when the abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred within Ohio.

(FF) If applicable, the PCSA shall contact other PCSAs immediately, but no later than the next working day from receipt of the report, to share information in accordance with rule 5101:2-33-21 of the Administrative Code and to coordinate investigative efforts in accordance with rules 5101:2-36-03 to 5101:2-36-05 of the Administrative Code.

(GG) The PCSA shall follow procedures set forth in rule 5101:2-36-07 of the Administrative Code when the report of neglect involves alleged withholding of medically indicated treatment from a disabled infant with life-threatening conditions.

(HH) The assessment/investigation documentation and any materials obtained as a result of the assessment/investigation shall be maintained in the case record. If any information gathering activity cannot be completed, justification and the written approval of the director or the designee shall be filed in the case record in accordance with rule 5101:2-36-11 of the Administrative Code.

Replaces: 5101:2-34-32

Effective:

R.C. 119.032 review dates:

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Certification

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Date

Promulgated Under: 119.03  
Statutory Authority: 2151.421, 5153.16.  
Rule Amplifies: 2151.3518, 2151.421, 5153.16  
Prior Effective Dates: 2/1/82, 10/1/82, 1/1/87, 1/1/88, 3/15/88, 1/1/90,  
10/1/95, 6/1/96, 6/1/97, 10//97 (Emer.), 12/30/97;  
4/1/01, 12/1/01, 6/25/04