



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual
1172 CPS ASSESSMENTS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Chapter: Child Protective Field Services

Section: CPS Family Assessments

Approved:

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References Of Note

Federal Authority:

Statutes: [RSA 169-C](#) and [RSA 170-G](#)

Administrative Rules:

Case Law:

This policy establishes DCYF's practice for conducting timely and thorough Assessments of abuse and neglect.

Required Practices

Any deviations to the following information must be documented with Supervisory Approval.

- I. DCYF must commence an Assessment within 72 hours of the referral being assigned to the District Office, including weekends and holidays, by taking meaningful action to ensure the alleged victim's safety.
 - A. Meaningful action will address immediate safety concerns and may include, but is not limited to, face-to-face contact with the alleged victim.
 - B. An immediate response is required when there is reason to believe a child's immediate safety or well-being is in danger, the family may flee, or the child may disappear.
- II. Face-to-face contact with alleged victims must occur within assigned timeframes (excluding weekends and holidays) unless there are mitigating circumstances.
 - A. In the event the child cannot be located or seen within the required timeframes, the CPSW will consult with their Supervisor prior to the timeframe ending to determine the best course of action.
 - B. Ongoing and concerted efforts must be made to locate and interview the alleged victim.
 - C. All attempts to locate and interview the alleged victim must be documented in the DCYF electronic information system no later than the end of the next business day.
- III. The CPSW completes the following as soon as possible, preferably before making contact with the family:

- A. Review any prior DCYF involvement (both CPS and JJS) with household members in the DCYF electronic information system to identify any safety risks and determine relevance to the current concerns;
 - B. Check all adult household members against Central Registry for possible matches;
 - C. Contact local law enforcement to determine any relevant involvement with household members and make appropriate notifications as outlined below;
 - D. Discuss the concerns with the reporter;
 - E. Plan a course of action to interview alleged victims, siblings, parents/guardians (non-offending), alleged perpetrators, and other household members; and
 - F. Identify potential collateral sources relevant to the concerns or who could provide additional information relative to family functioning and safety of the child.
 - 1. Collateral sources include persons who can provide meaningful, objective information as to the family and the parents' ability to ensure safety.
 - 2. The confidentiality of the family must be respected and collateral contacts are only to be given information regarding the family necessary in order to enable DCYF to assess the allegations of abuse and neglect.
- IV. Any allegation as identified in RSA 169-C:38 I (a)-(e) must be verbally reported to law enforcement by phone or in person immediately and followed up with written notification within 48 hours.
- A. Form 1174 Law Enforcement Notification Letter, generated through the DCYF electronic information system, is forwarded to any law enforcement agency and County Attorney (or equivalent) who may have jurisdiction.
 - B. A Law Enforcement Notification Addendum (Form 1174A) is forwarded, as indicated in section A above, along with Form 1174 when newly identified possible crimes against the child are learned over the course of the Assessment.
 - C. Verbal and written notification is documented as a collateral in the DCYF electronic information system and in the DCYF electronic information system LEA screen the day notification is made.
- V. Any plan of action requested by law enforcement that does not align with the established timeframe or DCYF policy must be discussed with the CPSW's Supervisor immediately.
- VI. A Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approach is utilized in accordance with the [Attorney General's Model Protocol for the Multidisciplinary Response to Child Abuse and Neglect](#).
- VII. The identity of a "non-disclosed" reporter must be protected at all times throughout the Assessment. In the event that court-action is required, the CPSW discusses with the staff Attorney how to proceed prior to disclosing the reporter's name.

- VIII. Parents/guardians must be provided with the Caregiver Guide to Child Protective Services (Form 1172) brochure at the time of the first face-to-face visit and asked to sign the attached receipt, which will be maintained in the Assessment file.
- A. If the parents/guardians decline to sign the receipt, the brochure is left with them and the CPSW documents this in the DCYF electronic information system.
- IX. CPSWs must:
- A. Advise parents/guardians of the allegations made;
- B. Determine and verify the full name, age, sex, address, and race of each member of the household and family, including:
1. All children who reside in or visit the home, including on a part-time, temporary, or limited basis;
 2. Any child of an adult in the household, regardless of their place of residence;
 3. All adults in the household; and
 4. Any adult outside the household who is a parent or otherwise responsible for the care of a child in the family;
- C. Inquire as to the identity, whereabouts, and contact information of any parent or child not living in the household;
- D. Complete a comprehensive assessment of each abuse or neglect allegation reported to identify any evidence to support a determination of founded or unfounded; and
- E. Assess each caregiver's ability to ensure the child's safety and take necessary action as appropriate. If danger is identified, the CPSW will:
1. Consider the appropriateness of developing a short-term [safety plan](#) that will mitigate the danger; or
 2. Immediately consult with their Supervisor when a viable safety plan cannot be established.
- X. Allegations that an infant was born with, and is identified as being affected by, substance use or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder as determined by a medical professional may require additional Assessment procedures as indicated in [policy 1184 Enhanced Response](#).
- XI. The safety and well-being of all children in the household, including children who reside in the home on a part-time, temporary, or limited basis is assessed throughout the Assessment in accordance with [policy 1173 Engaging Families](#).

- XII. The CPSW immediately notifies their Supervisor of any situation where a child reported to be in the home or known to have previously resided in the home cannot be located (at any point during the Assessment).
 - A. If the child is reported to have moved to the custody or care of another parent or adult, the CPSW obtains confirmation as to the child's whereabouts from the current caregiver or a third-party such as the child's school, law enforcement, or another state's child welfare agency.
 - B. If the child is an alleged victim or new information emerges that indicates the child may be a victim of or witness to abuse or neglect, the CPSW makes arrangements to ensure a timely safety assessment with child welfare services where the child is located.
- XIII. Any interview/observation conducted with a child without parent/guardian permission must have supervisory approval and be done in the least intrusive manner possible.
 - A. The parents/guardians must be contacted as soon as possible (or permissible when law enforcement is involved) after any interview they were not previously made aware of.
- XIV. Any interview of a child conducted in a public setting (including day care) must be recorded in its entirety, without interruption. Recorded interviews must be clearly labeled and properly stored at all times.
- XV. Alleged injuries must be observed, photographed (when possible), and documented in the DCYF electronic information system as part of the alleged victim contact.
 - A. If it is necessary for the child to remove their clothing to observe/document injuries, a third party must be present and every effort must be made to be as least intrusive to the child as possible.
 - B. Label each photograph with:
 - 1. The child's name and date of birth;
 - 2. The date, time, and place taken;
 - 3. The Assessment number;
 - 4. The name of the CPSW taking the photo; and
 - 5. The names of any witnesses present when the photo was taken.
- XVI. The CPSW consults with the Child Advocacy and Protection Program (CAPP) to receive guidance from a medical professional when appropriate.
 - A. If there is a life threatening medical issue, the CPSW must call 911 immediately.

- B. If it appears that the child has experienced severe physical/sexual abuse or neglect, or has an unattended medical problem, the CPSW will seek to have the child evaluated by a medical professional (as indicated by consultation with CAPP).
 - C. If a parent/guardian refuses access to the child or refuses a reasonable request to have the child examined, the CPSW consults with their Supervisor and staff Attorney to determine what [investigatory interventions](#) may be appropriate to ensure the child's safety.
- XVII. The alleged victim's primary care physician (when known) must be notified of the nature of the allegations via the Primary Health Care Provider Notification (Form 1195).
- XVIII.A Safety Assessment is completed no later than within 24 hours of initial contact with the alleged victim. The determination of the Safety Assessment will be taken into consideration in determining what, if any, action must be taken to ensure safety.
- XIX. If an Assessment is selected for [Risk and Safety Consultation \(RSC\)](#), the CPSW will prioritize the follow up on any assigned RSF tasks.
- XX. Any information gathered during the course of an ongoing Assessment that indicates a [new allegation](#), must be reviewed with the CPSW's Supervisor and added to the already open Assessment or reported to Central Intake accordingly.
- XXI. A Risk Assessment is completed within 30 days of initial contact with the alleged victim and the results used in determining further DCYF involvement (see [policy 1213 Final Determinations in an Assessment](#)).
- XXII. The CPSW follows up with any professional reporter before making a final determination of unfounded to inquire as to any new information or concerns and provide information as to if the Division will continue to be involved with the family.
- XXIII. An administrative review of all identified reports will be conducted when there have been 2 or more prior Assessments closed as "Unfounded" or "Unfounded but with Reasonable Concerns" involving the family or any household member.
- XXIV. All contact relative to the Assessment, including voicemails, texts, and written correspondence (e.g. letters sent or received and email), must be documented in the DCYF electronic information system in a timely manner.

Standard Operating Procedures		
SOP	Title	Applicable Disciplines
1172.1	Planning and Commencing an Assessment	CPS
1172.2	Report to Law Enforcement	CPS
1172.3	Interviewing Children	CPS
1172.4	Interviewing Parents/Guardians	CPS
1172.5	Professional Reporters and Collaterals	CPS

1172.6	Medical Services
1172.7	Multi-Disciplinary Teams
1172.8	Safety and Risk Assessments
1172.9	Administrative Reviews

Applicable Forms	
Form	Title
1172	Caregiver Guide to Child Protective Services
1174	Law Enforcement Notification Letter
1174A	Law Enforcement Notification Addendum
1195	Primary Health Care Provider Notification

Glossary and Document Specific Definitions

[A - B](#) [C - D](#) [E - F](#) [G - I](#) [J - L](#) [M - N](#) [O - Q](#) [R - S](#) [T - V](#) [W - Z](#)

Document Change Log			
PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date