

Investigation of Allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect in a Caregiver Home

SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

<p>ORC: N/A</p> <p>OAC: 5101:2-36-01; 5101:2-36-03; 5101:2-36-04; 5101:2-36-05; 5101:2-36-08; 5101:2-36-12</p> <p>USC: N/A</p> <p>CFR: N/A</p>	<p>ORIGINAL: 6/06</p> <p>REVISIONS: 7/06; 9/13/06; 3/19/09; 5/8/19</p> <p>RELATED FORM(S): N/A</p> <p>RELATED PROCEDURE/POLICY(IES): N/A</p>
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|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Services - All Departments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services - Foster & Adoption |

All Staff Bargaining Unit Non-Bargaining Management

POLICY:

Summit County Children Services (SCCS) is committed to the safety and well-being of all children. Any allegations that a foster or kinship caregiver or a household member has abused or neglected a child in the custody of the agency will be fully assessed and reviewed by the agency. All cases will be assigned to a specific intake unit, assessed in a timely and efficient manner, and investigated collaboratively.

PROCEDURE:

The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) gives SCCS the authority to establish an independent unit to assess allegations of abuse and/or neglect in out of home care settings. The Serious Trauma and Assessment Team (STAT) will follow the OAC rules for conducting the assessment and Public Child Service Agency (PCSA) requirements involving a third party in the assessment/investigation of a child abuse/neglect report. SCCS will assign all cases to this specific intake unit that involve allegations of abuse and/or neglect against foster parents, kinship care providers or members of their household.

If there is reason to believe a criminal offense is alleged, according to the Summit County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), SCCS will coordinate the assessment with law enforcement rather than another PCSA. An assessment/investigation conducted by a third party such as law enforcement or another PCSA does not relieve SCCS of its responsibility for conducting its own assessment.

The following steps will be followed in assessing abuse or neglect of any child in agency custody residing in a foster or kinship caregiver home:

1. SCCS will respond to the reported concerns within the same day. The agency may use after hours staff members in the event that the report was received after normal business hours and/or on the weekend and/or a holiday. The initial response will include an attempt to have face to face contact with all required parties within the same day. Only if the alleged child victim and all other children in the custody of the agency are out of the home due to removal, respite or other reasons can there be a delay in the same day response time. If face to face contact cannot be completed within the same day, all children in the custody of the agency and placed in a foster home, whether or not identified as alleged victims, will be placed in a respite setting until the assessment is complete unless there is approval by the Department Director, Intake and/or Placement and Permanency Planning (PPP) for the children to remain in the home;
2. A hotline caseworker will e-mail notification of the receipt of the report to the foster care caseworker (coordinator) or the kinship caseworker and supervisor, the assigned caseworker and supervisor for each child residing in the home and the Department Director, PPP when the agency receives a report involving a SCCS foster home or kinship provider;
3. The report will be assigned to a caseworker within the Serious Trauma and Assessment Team (STAT). The intake caseworker will make reasonable efforts whenever possible to arrange for the child's caseworker and/or foster care caseworker (coordinator) to accompany the intake caseworker for the initial interview;
4. The intake caseworker will assume the lead role in interviewing all involved parties. If a report is received on a case that is open in a protective unit, the assigned protective caseworker will assume the responsibility of notifying the caregiver(s) of the reported allegations no later than the next working day from the date the report was screened in;
5. The intake caseworker will contact the intake supervisor before leaving the foster or kinship caregiver home after the initial interviews to provide a brief case update. The intake caseworker and/or supervisor should immediately communicate with the child's caseworker or supervisor regarding the health and safety of the children and arrange for any necessary follow up or placement changes. The intake caseworker and/or the assigned caseworker shall arrange for all children in agency custody to be placed in a respite home until completion of the assessment unless interviews with the alleged child victims and foster or kinship caregivers are able to be completed and all allegations appear to be unsubstantiated;

6. Documentation of the intake caseworker's interview with the alleged child victim(s) in foster care may be utilized by the foster home caseworker (coordinator) for purposes of any rule violation that needs generated;
7. Prior to the conclusion of the report, the intake caseworker will request an Administrative Case Conference (ACC) to discuss report allegations and disposition concerns on all cases;
8. All placement changes and paperwork/required documentation related to the placement changes are the responsibility of the child's caseworker;
9. If the hotline caseworker (screener) believes the report to be a screen-out, not rising to the level of abuse or neglect, the report will be sent to the hotline supervisor for screen out approval, then to the department director for final screen out approval;
10. For screened out reports, the hotline caseworker (screener) will send notification to the appropriate PPP staff members and assigned caseworker and supervisor via List.ProviderNotification;
11. PPP staff members shall review screened out report information for potential rules violations;
12. SCCS will notify the licensing authority and supervision authority no later than four working days of the screening decision to share information.