

CARELINE AND INTAKE

Child Protective Investigations

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Policy Following completion of the SDM Screening and Response Priority Tools, the Careline shall review all accepted child protective services reports for assignment to the appropriate response track.

Child protective services reports which do not meet criteria for the Family Assessment track or for which Careline designates a response time of less than 72 hours shall be assigned to the child protective investigations track.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 22-2, "Intake"

Commencement Date "**Commencement**" of the investigation is defined as the initial face- to-face contact (or attempted face-to-face contact) with the family. The telephone call prior to the home visit is made as a courtesy to the family and does not mark the commencement of the investigation.

Introductory Telephone Call Whenever possible and appropriate, the first contact with the parents or other caregiver shall be by telephone.

The ISW shall:

- introduce him-or herself;
 - provide the parent or caregiver with a summary of the report;
 - explain the investigations process; and
 - schedule a home or site visit.
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Timeline for Completion of Investigation The investigation shall be completed, as verified by the approval of the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol," within forty five calendar days of acceptance of the report at the Careline. Final disposition (transfer or closure) shall be completed within seven calendar days of the approval of the DCF-2074.

Who Conducts Investigations? Investigations of allegations of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be conducted by:

- Intake Social Workers (ISWs) located in DCF Offices throughout the state when the Offices are open;
- Careline Primary Social Workers or Regional On-call Social Workers who are assigned to respond to reports of abuse and neglect when the Offices are not open; or
- the Special Investigations Unit, in cases outlined in DCF Policy 22-1-1 "Special Investigations Unit"

If an investigation is initiated by Careline or On-call staff, the investigation shall be transferred to the Area Office on the next business day and the commencement time, if met, shall be considered "met" by the Careline or On-call staff. The commencement shall be documented in the DCF-2074.

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Documentation All activity by any DCF employee related to the investigation shall be documented in the computer system within five days of the occurrence.

All activities and information gathered by the ISW that leads to the disposition of the investigation shall be documented in the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol."

Review and Assignment by ISWS

Upon receipt of a report from Careline, ISWS shall:

- review the report and any information in the computer system that is necessary to begin the investigation;
- assign the report to an ISW in a timeframe that allows for the Social Worker to complete commencement as designated.
- document the assignment of the report to an ISW along with supervisory expectations, including the following, as needed on specific cases:
 - whether the initial home visit should be announced or unannounced;
 - how and when to notify the parents;
 - whether to interview the child without the parents' permission;
 - how to conduct the interviews; and
- obtain and review any active or closed records related to the case.

Note: Response times are assigned by Careline as designated by the SDM Response Priority Tool. If the ISWS believes that the response time should be changed based on additional information available in the Area Office, the ISWS shall obtain the approval of a Program Supervisor prior to downgrading the response time. The rationale for the change in response time shall be documented in the computer system.

Reassignment to Another Area Office or SIU

If, after the reviewing the report, the ISWS determines that the case is more appropriately investigated by another Area Office or by the DCF Special Investigations Unit, the ISWS shall immediately notify the Program Supervisor.

The Program Supervisor shall immediately contact his or her counterpart in the receiving unit to make arrangements. The Program Supervisor shall ensure that the case is transferred as soon as possible and, ideally, by the end of the day so that the receiving unit can meet the designated response time.

Coordination with Law Enforcement

If not already completed by Careline, the ISW shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency (using the DCF-737, "Notification to State or Local Police of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse, Severe Physical Abuse or Severe Neglect") within 12 hours of receipt of a report alleging sexual abuse or serious physical abuse including, but not limited to, a report that a child:

- has died;
 - has been sexually assaulted;
 - has suffered brain damage or loss or serious impairment of a bodily function or organ;
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Coordination with Law Enforcement (Continued)

- has been sexually exploited; or
- has suffered serious non-accidental physical injuries.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101b.

The above-listed circumstances are those for which DCF is required by law to notify law enforcement. DCF staff shall also notify law enforcement in cases involving, but not limited to:

- assault on a child by a person who is not the child's caregiver;
- a child under the age of 12 left unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or in a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents a substantial risk to the child's health or safety (*e.g.*, stores, restaurants, parks, malls);
- serious domestic and intimate partner violence; and
- human trafficking.

Cross reference: DCF Policy 22-1, "Careline."

In a case with a companion criminal investigation, interviews of children shall be conducted jointly with law enforcement whenever possible, but the DCF interviews shall take place within the time frames designated in this policy.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. 17a-101h.

Law enforcement may also be contacted in cases in which the safety of a person, including the ISW, may be at risk during the field response, including children found to be at imminent risk of harm.

Notification to Schools and Child Caring Facilities

Whenever a report has been received alleging abuse or neglect by an employee of a public or private school or a facility or institution caring for children, the ISW shall notify the principal, headmaster, executive director or other person in charge of such institution, facility or school, or the person's designee of the report and the commencement of the investigation, unless such person is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or neglect, in which case, the ISW shall consult with DCF legal staff to determine to whom the notification should be made.

In the case of a public school, the ISW shall also notify the alleged perpetrator's employing superintendent or their designee.

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Notification to Schools and Child Caring Facilities (continued)

School employee, has the same meaning as provided in Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-65 which states:

““School employee” means: (A) A teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or a private elementary, middle or high school or working in a public or private elementary, middle or high school; or (B) any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in (i) a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education, or (ii) a private elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the supervisory agent of such private school.”

Note: Employees under contract may include bus drivers, janitors, or other such individuals.

In the case of a report concerning a school employee or a person employed by an institution or facility licensed or approved by the State of Connecticut to provide care for children, DCF shall notify the Department of Education or the state agency that issued the license or approval to the institution or facility of the report and the commencement of an investigation.

Note: These notifications shall be made regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator committed the acts in his or her professional capacity or personal capacity.

Legal references: Conn. Gen. Stat. §§17a-101b(d), 17a-101g(a).

Investigations of Child Care Providers

If not already done by the Careline staff, the ISW shall notify the Office of Early Childhood if the investigation involves a licensed or unlicensed child care provider.

The investigation shall be conducted in collaboration with OEC in accordance with the terms of the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of Early Childhood and the Department of Children and Families” (located on the DCF Fiscal SharePoint page under MOA 379, OEC DCF MOA Investigation Protocol).

Gathering Information

The ISW shall take the following steps to gather information about the child and family:

- review the report;
- call the reporter to discuss additional information;
- review current and prior DCF encounters with the family or case participants noting potential trends or patterns in the CPS history and factors that may present risk or impact child safety;
- obtain case and legal history from other states;
- determine if there is active DCF involvement with any identified household member and, if so, consult with the assigned Social Worker; and
- consult with DCF staff who have had previous contact with the family, as necessary.

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Planning the Investigation After gathering as much information as possible, the ISW shall meet with the ISWS to discuss and plan the investigation, including consideration of the following:

- safety concerns for the child, parents and ISW;
- the generation of DCF-823, "Notification of Exceptional circumstances", if applicable and if not already completed by Careline;
- whether the initial home visit should be announced or unannounced;
- how and when to notify the parents;
- whether to interview the child without the parents' permission;
- how to conduct the interviews;
- racial, ethnic and/or cultural considerations, immigration status, and language needs, including arranging for an interpreter;
- whether to seek a consult with an RRG representative or legal staff; and
- collaterals to be contacted, including but not limited to:
 - law enforcement;
 - school;
 - substitute caregiver or childcare provider;
 - pediatrician or other primary care provider;
 - mental health providers;
 - community service providers, past and present; and
 - relatives, neighbors or other third parties when evidence indicates they may have information pertinent to the investigation.

Cross references: DCF Policy 21-13 "Immigration", Notification of Exceptional Circumstances," 21-3 "Delivery of Services Using a Client's Preferred Method of Communication" and 21-6, "Regional Resource Group."

Supervision The ISWS shall conduct consultation with the ISW regarding the following:

- safety concerns for the child, parents and ISW;
- results and approval of the SDM Safety Assessment;
- the generation of a DCF-823, "Notification of Exceptional Circumstances," if applicable and if not already completed by Careline;
- known risk factors;
- family's protective factors, capacity and strengths;
- child's physical and psychological vulnerability;
- collaterals to be contacted, including but not limited to:
 - law enforcement;
 - school;
 - substitute caregiver or childcare provider;
 - pediatrician or other primary care provider;
 - mental health providers;
 - community service providers, past and present; and
 - relatives, neighbors or other third parties when evidence indicates they may have information pertinent to the investigation;
- whether to seek a consult with an RRG representative or legal staff;
- racial, ethnic and/or cultural consideration, immigration status and linguistic needs, including arranging for an interpreter if needed; and
- fatherhood engagement; and
- case disposition.

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Supervision (continued)

The ISWS shall:

- document the assignment of the report to an ISW along with supervisory expectations;
- conduct and document a minimum of two supervisory conferences during the duration of the investigation;
- provide guidance and direction for investigation activities; and
- document case consultations, assessments, rationale for decisions, response determination, guidance and direction, reviews and assignments in the computer system.

Cross references: DCF Policy 2-3-2, "Supervision"; 22-1-2 "Notification of Exceptional Circumstances"; 21-3 "Delivery of Services Using a Client's Preferred Method of Communication"; and 21-6 "Regional Resource Group".

Initial Face-to-Face Contact with Child within Response Time

The ISW shall meet face-to-face with the child(ren) who is the subject of the report at the home or at another site as appropriate, *e.g.*, school or hospital, within the designated response time.

Initial Home Visit

When making a home visit, unless a child is at imminent risk of physical harm, the ISW shall enter the home only if:

- a parent or legal guardian is present; or
- a parent or legal guardian has granted permission and another adult is present in the home.

Note: If the children are at imminent risk of harm, the ISW shall contact the police for assistance.

During the home or site visit, the ISW shall:

- provide the parent or other caregiver with the Parent's Right to Know (PRTK) brochure and request that they sign the acknowledgement as indicated on the PRTK brochure;
- provide the parent or other caregiver with the DCF-2236, "Notice of Privacy Practices," and request that they sign a copy as an acknowledgement of receipt;
- observe and conduct interviews with the following persons in and out of the home:
 - the parents, including non-custodial parents;
 - the legal guardian of the child, if not the parent;
 - other persons responsible for the care of the child;
 - the child identified in the report; and
 - any other children in the home;

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Initial Home Visit

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Note: Efforts will be made to conduct interviews with all children who are not subject to the report in the home within five business days of the CPS report in order to assess child's safety in the home and to address risk factors. The ISW shall inform the SWS of any delays in interviewing the children.

- inquire about any past or present family or probate court involvement with the family;
- when assessed as appropriate by the ISWS, during the initial home visit the ISW shall also observe and conduct interviews with:
 - other children who have access to the home or the alleged perpetrator;
 - all other household members; and
 - family resources and supports;
- assess the physical safety of the child(ren) using the SDM Safety Assessment tool;
- assess for potential risk factors within the family including intimate partner violence, substance use and mental health concerns;
- consider the family's race, ethnicity, and/or culture;
- consider the family's linguistic preferences/needs;
- consider the family's immigration status;
- assess the safety and well-being of the children in the home;
- assess the physical environment; and
- make a preliminary determination as to the identity of the alleged perpetrator and the nature, extent and cause(s) of the reported abuse or neglect.

The ISW shall discuss the following with the parent or other caregiver:

- DCF's protective services mandate and the need to assess the safety of the child;
- the allegations in the report;
- the family's response and feedback to the allegations;
- the family's strengths, needs and current supports;
- the importance of identifying additional formal and informal supports and resources;
- medical and dental care;
- referrals to service providers;
- the purpose of child and family team meetings;
- follow-up appointments and activities;
- assessment of protective factors; and
- other topics relevant to the specific case such as safe sleep and early childhood information.

The ISW shall gather the following information:

- name, age and physical and psychological condition of all children residing in the household;
- demographic information necessary to conduct mandatory criminal history and CPS record background checks of the alleged perpetrator, parents, guardians and household members who are age 18 years and older; and
- necessary releases of information.

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Initial Home Visit

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In all cases, the ISW shall have meaningful face-to-face contact with the child who is the subject of the report.

If the actions listed above cannot be completed during the initial visit, the ISW shall ensure they are addressed as soon as possible but before the close of the investigation.

Inability to Contact Parents or Other Caregiver

When unable to complete the initial face-to-face contact with the parents, guardian or other caregiver, the ISW shall:

- notify the ISWS;
- make attempts to schedule such contact as determined in consultation with the ISWS; and
- document all attempts in the computer system.

The ISWS shall have the discretion to determine when efforts to establish contact with a parent or caregiver may stop. The decision and rationale to stop such efforts must be documented in the computer system.

If Parents Refuse Entry / or inability to interview child

If the parents refuse entry into the home or refuse to allow the ISW to interview the child who is subject of the report and there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is at imminent risk of harm, the ISW shall contact the police and request assistance.

In cases in which imminent risk of harm is not obvious but the parent will not allow the ISW to access the home or refusing to allow the ISW to interview the child who is subject of the report, a legal and/or RRG consultation may be sought at the discretion of the ISWS.

If the whereabouts of the child who is the subject of the report are unknown, the ISW shall:

- notify the ISWS;
- make daily attempts to schedule such contact as determined in consultation with the ISWS; and
- document all attempts in the computer system.

If no contact can be made with the subject child within five days, a legal and/or RRG consultation may be sought at the discretion of the ISWS.

Note: No investigation shall be closed if the child who is the subject of the report has not been seen, unless approved by the Area Office Director. The decision and rationale to close without seeing the child shall be documented in the computer system.

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Frequency of Home Visits

The frequency of home visits and the required case contacts during the pendency of the investigation shall be determined in supervision taking into consideration:

- case circumstances;
- physical and psychological risk and safety concerns;
- age of the child; and
- the child's visibility in the community.

At a minimum, following the initial contact with the family, follow-up visits shall occur at the midpoint of the investigation and prior to the case closing.

Note: If the investigation is completed prior to the 45 days, the midpoint visit shall be at the discretion of the ISWS. For cases that remain active beyond 45 days, the frequency of visitation shall be determined in supervision.

The ISWS shall document the required case contacts and the rationale for the decision.

Interviewing the Child Victim

The ISW shall conduct an interview with the child who is the subject of the report as follows:

- obtain the consent of a parent, guardian or other caregiver, except when:
 - DCF has reason to believe that the parent or guardian or other person responsible is the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect; or
 - seeking such consent would place the child at imminent risk of physical harm;
- when possible, interview the child apart from the parent, guardian or other caregiver; and
- coordinate interviews and share information with other professionals who may also need to interview the child in a manner that minimizes the number of interviews in which a child must participate.

Note: If parental consent is not required to conduct an interview of a child, another disinterested adult shall be present unless immediate access is necessary to protect the child from imminent risk of physical harm and a disinterested adult is not available after a reasonable search.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101h.

Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator

Reasonable efforts shall be made to locate the alleged perpetrator. The ISW shall interview the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or neglect, regardless of that person's place of residence. While the perpetrator has the right to refuse to participate, best efforts shall be made to gain his or her perspective on the allegations.

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Structured Decision Making (SDM) Safety Assessment

The ISW shall assess the physical safety of all the children in the home during the initial and ongoing face-to-face contact with the child(ren) and family, utilizing the SDM Safety Assessment.

The SDM Safety Assessment results shall be documented in the computer system within five days of the initial face-to-face contact with the family. The ISWS shall approve the SDM Safety Assessment no later than 15 days after its completion.

Note: A new SDM Safety Assessment shall be completed whenever new information becomes available that suggests a change in the child(ren)'s safety status.

Structured Decision Making (SDM) Risk Assessment

The ISW shall complete the SDM Risk Assessment tool prior to the end of the investigation to identify potential risk factors that influence future risk of harm. In doing so, supportive services shall be identified and secured to:

- minimize risk factors;
- address the needs of the family; and
- improve family functioning and well-being.

The ISW shall take action as indicated by the assessment.

Safety Planning

If safety factors are identified in the SDM Safety Assessment, the ISW shall engage the family and its providers and other resources to help identify strategies and interventions that can be implemented immediately to safeguard the children and mitigate the safety factor(s). The interventions shall be documented in the DCF-2180, "Safety Plan."

Prior to the completion of the Safety Plan, the ISW shall contact the ISWS to review the results of the Safety Assessment and discuss the proposed interventions to ensure the children are safe and protected. When appropriate, the ISWS shall consult with the Program Supervisor prior to the approval of the Safety Plan.

If no interventions are available that can provide appropriate protection for the children, removal shall be actively pursued.

All Safety Plans shall be reviewed and monitored closely to ensure that the planned interventions are effective in mitigating the safety factors and that the parties are following through and cooperating.

Interventions may be modified as necessary to ensure the child's continued safety. Modifications require the development of a new Safety Plan. If the Safety Plan is not effective in mitigating the safety factors, the child shall be considered "unsafe" and removed from the home.

The rationale for the elements of the Safety Plan and any modifications shall be documented in the computer system.

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Out-of-Home Placement If at any time during the course of the investigation, it is determined that a child is at imminent risk of physical harm from the child's surroundings and that immediate removal from such surroundings is necessary to ensure the child's safety, the Intake staff (or Ongoing Services staff if the case is already opened for child protective services) shall initiate appropriate legal proceedings.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101g(e).

Considered Removal Child and Family Team Meeting A Considered Removal Child and Family Team Meeting (CR-CFTM) shall be required for all cases in which a child is being considered for immediate removal from his or her home based on the identification of a safety factor (as indicated by the SDM Safety Assessment).

Except in cases of emergency, the CR-CFTM shall be held prior to the child's removal.

If the child is represented by an attorney or guardian ad litem, the child's attorney or guardian ad litem shall be notified in writing not less than five days prior to the date of any meeting in which the department is considering removing the child from the household, except, if immediate removal of a child from his or her household has been authorized.

Cross references: DCF Policy 21-2-1, "Considered Removal: Child and Family Team Meetings;" "Considered Removal (CR-CFTM) Practice Guide."

Collateral Contacts and Consultation

The ISW shall:

- make the following collateral contacts, as appropriate to the child:
 - school, substitute caregiver or childcare provider;
 - pediatrician or other primary care provider;
 - mental health provider;
 - current and past community service providers; and
 - relatives, neighbors and other third parties when evidence indicates they may have information pertinent to the investigation; and
- seek consultation as needed with:
 - the Regional Resource Group;
 - the Area Office attorney or Assistant Attorney General; and
 - arrange for a medical evaluation of the child, if appropriate.

If the family declines to sign releases of information, the ISW shall inform the ISWS of the status of the collateral contacts and develop strategies to gather information to help inform the assessment

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Mandatory Background Checks

The ISW shall conduct a Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) criminal history records check and a child protective services check on the parents, legal guardians or other caregivers, the alleged perpetrator, and all household members age 16 years and over.

The ISW shall conduct a Protective Order Registry check of the parents and all other persons for whom intimate partner violence is a concern.

The ISW shall include criminal, child protective services and protective order histories as part of the overall assessment of the family.

Out-of-State Child Protection Agencies

If the incident occurred out of state, the ISW shall make contact with the out-of-state child protection agency within one working day to make a referral.

If, during the course of the investigation, the family moves out of state, a report shall be made to the appropriate out-of-state child protection agency, if there are any remaining child protection concerns.

If the parents or alleged perpetrator resided in another state during the lifetime of any child participants, the ISW shall contact that state's child protection agency to obtain information regarding any contact the family may have had with that agency.

Substance Use Concerns

During an investigation, if there are indications of drug or alcohol use or dependency by a:

- household member;
- person with caregiving responsibilities; or
- person who has access to the children in the home,

the ISW may request that such person(s) undergo substance use evaluation and testing.

In determining whether to refer a person for substance use evaluation and testing, the ISW shall discuss any concerns or questions with the ISWS and, if necessary, with the Regional Resource Group (RRG) Substance Use Specialist.

If the person refuses to participate in voluntary substance use testing and evaluation or does not keep appointments, a legal and/or RRG consultation may be sought at the discretion of the ISWS.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 21-7, "Substance Use Disorder and Testing" and "Substance Use Practice Guide"

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Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence

During an investigation, if there are indications of intimate partner or domestic violence (IPV/DV), the ISW shall assess for safety and risk using a tool based on best practice standards identified by DCF.

When IPV/DV is suspected, interviews of non-offenders and children shall be conducted outside the presence of the alleged offender and shall be arranged in a manner that minimizes safety concerns.

If an adult or child refuses to participate in the IPV/DV assessment, a legal and/or RRG consultation may be sought at the discretion of the ISWS.

A person's refusal to participate the IPV/DV assessment shall be factored into the determination of risk to the child.

Cross Reference: DCF Policy 21-8, "Intimate Partner Violence" and "Intimate Partner Violence Practice Guide".

Screening for Developmental Delays

In any case in which there is a child age three years or younger who has been substantiated as a victim of abuse or neglect in the household, prior to the completion of the investigation, the ISW shall assist the parent or other caregiver with contacting the Child Development Infoline (CDI) to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for each child age three years or younger.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-106(e).

Cross reference: "Early Childhood Practice Guide for Children Aged Zero to Five".

Completing the Investigation

Upon completion of the field response, the ISW shall take the following actions to complete the investigation:

- make a preliminary determination as to whether child abuse or neglect is substantiated or unsubstantiated;
 - if child abuse or neglect is substantiated, identify the person responsible;
 - make a preliminary determination as to whether the identified person poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children and should be recommended for placement on the Central Registry, and whether the information should be immediately disclosable or non-disclosable pending the appeal period;
 - connect the family to needed resources and supports; and
 - complete the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol."
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Completion of an Already Active In Treatment (AAT)

If the investigation is on a case that is already open in Ongoing Services, the ISWS and ISW shall collaborate with the Ongoing Services staff; however, the Intake staff shall remain responsible for determining whether the allegation should be substantiated or unsubstantiated. The Intake and Ongoing Services SWS and Social Workers shall meet at the conclusion of the investigation to discuss case findings.

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ISWS's Decision to Substantiate or Unsubstantiate

The ISWS shall make the final determination (final decisions are subject to review and approval of the Commissioner or designee) regarding whether each separate allegation should be substantiated or unsubstantiated and identify each victim and perpetrator for each allegation, based on the family's protective factors, the results of the SDM Safety and Risk Assessments and the ISW's findings and preliminary determination.

The legal standard for a substantiation is "reasonable cause to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred." If any allegation is substantiated, the ISWS shall also determine:

- whether the identified person responsible poses a risk to the health, safety or well-being of children and should be recommended for placement on the Central Registry (the determination for registry should be based on the totality of the case history and present circumstances); and
- if the person is recommended for placement on the Central Registry, whether DCF may disclose that the person is on the Central Registry pending exhaustion or waiver of all administrative appeals.

Note: If a person is recommended for placement on the Central Registry, this should be indicated by selecting "Non-disclosable" in the computer system. Selecting "Disclosable" means the information will be disclosed during the appeal period. "

"Disclosable" should only be selected for persons recommended for placement on the Central Registry when the abuse or neglect resulted in or involves:

- the death of a child;
- the risk of serious physical injury or emotional harm of a child;
- the serious physical harm of a child;
- the arrest of a person due to abuse or neglect of a child;
- a neglect or termination of parental rights petition filed by DCF, or
- sexual abuse of a child.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101k.

Cross references: DCF Policy 22-3"Operational Definitions of Abuse and Neglect" and 22-4, "Central Registry Placements."

Disposition of Investigation

The possible dispositions of an investigation as guided by the SDM Risk Assessment are:

Substantiated

- transfer the case to a DCF Ongoing Services unit for provision of services; or
- close the case, with or without referral for services to be provided by another state agency or a community service provider.

Unsubstantiated

- close the case, with or without a referral for services to be provided by another state agency or a community service provider; or
- transfer the case to Ongoing Services if the risk assessment indicates a moderate to high risk of child maltreatment or if the family could benefit from the services offered by Ongoing Services.

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Transfer to Ongoing Services

The table below sets forth the procedural requirements for Intake and Ongoing Services staff when a case will be transferred.

Transfer Process		
Who	Action	Timeframe
ISW	Complete required case entries in the computer system and forward to Intake ISWS for approval. Note: The ISW shall maintain case activity responsibility throughout the seven working day transfer process	Within five working days of the initial decision to transfer the case.
ISWS	Approve and transmit the intake information in the computer system and the Uniform Case Record to the Program Supervisor for Intake	Within two working days of receiving the case from the ISW in the computer system.
Program Supervisor for Intake	Transmit the intake information in the computer system and the uniform case record to the Program Supervisor of the designated Ongoing Services unit.	Within one day of receiving the case from the ISWS in the computer system.
Program Supervisor for the Ongoing Services unit	Review and transmit the case to the assigned Ongoing Services Supervisor. Note: The Ongoing Program Supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that the case gets assigned to the Ongoing Services Social Worker within the specified time frame.	Within one working day of receiving the case from the Intake Program Supervisor in the computer system
Ongoing Services SWS	Read, review and assign the case to an Ongoing Services Social Worker.	Within three working days of receipt of the case from the Program Supervisor.

Note: The entire transfer process shall be completed within seven working days of the approval of the case by the ISWS. (The reviews in the computer system may be completed by ISWS and Program Supervisor simultaneously.)

Case Transfer Process

Case Transfer Conference: A case transfer conference shall be held within five working days for all high risk cases, as determined by SDM and may be held in any other case when requested by the ISW and ISWS.

The case transfer conference shall be attended by the:

- ISW;
- ISWS;
- Regional Resource Group (RRG);
- Ongoing Services ISWS; and
- Ongoing Services Social Worker, if assigned.

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Case Transfer Process (continued)

Permanency Teaming: The ISW and assigned Ongoing Services Social Worker shall have a joint conversation during the last intake home visit to discuss the transition to Ongoing Services. A member of the RRG shall attend in high risk cases and in cases in which the RRG is already involved.

Family participants shall include but not be limited to the parents and children (as age- and developmentally-appropriate).

Topic to be discussed shall include:

- family strengths and needs;
- family composition;
- family supports;
- racial, ethnic, and/or cultural considerations, immigration status and language preference;
- goals and objectives to initiate the Case Plan;
- the timing and purpose of first Large Team and future planned meetings.

The ISW shall also invite:

- the family's and child's service providers;
- any professional involved in the investigation; and
- a Regional Resource Group representative, if applicable.

Case Transfers Between Offices

The Program Supervisor for Intake shall communicate with the appropriate Program Supervisor in another DCF Office when a case must be transferred to the other office. Case transfers between DCF Offices can be effected by the Program Supervisors of the sending and receiving offices upon the completion of the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol".

The decision to transfer a case to another office shall be based primarily on where the family resides, but transfers may occasionally occur for other reasons approved by the respective Office Directors.

STEP PROCEDURE

- 1 The completed and approved DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol" shall serve as the transfer document.
- 2 All case plans due within 30 days shall be completed by the sending office.
- 3 All legal requirements, including court work and court social studies, shall be completed by the sending office and all materials shall be immediately filed in the case record.
The Program Supervisor in the sending office shall speak directly with the receiving Program Supervisor prior to transfer to:
 - alert the receiving Program Supervisor of any potential concerns;
 - negotiate any special considerations concerning the case; and
 - arrange for the transfer of the case within five working days.
- 5 The sending office shall be responsible for all case activity including visits until the transfer process is complete.

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Notification to Child's Parents/Guardians

The ISW shall meet with the family face-to-face to inform them of the results of the investigation.

Within five days of the approval of the DCF-2074, the ISWS shall ensure that the child's parents or guardians are notified in writing of the outcome of the investigation utilizing the DCF-2210, "Notification of Investigation Results," or the DCF-2210C, "Notification of Investigation Results (Non-Perpetrator Parent or Guardian)."

The notification shall be provided in the family's preferred language.

Notification to Perpetrator

Within five days of the approval of the DCF-2074, the ISWS shall ensure that the perpetrator, if one has been identified, is notified in writing of the outcome by mailing the DCF-2210, "Notification of Investigation Results," to the person's last known address.

The notice shall include the DCF-2210B, "Request for Appeal of Substantiation Finding(s)/Recommendation for Placement on the Central Registry."

The notification shall be provided in the person's preferred language.

Notification to Mandated Reporter

Within five days of the approval of the DCF-2074, the ISWS shall ensure that the mandated reporter, if any, is informed of the outcome by use of the DCF-2122, "Letter to Mandated Reporters."

Notifications to State and Municipal Agencies

The ISWS shall ensure that the following state or municipal agencies are notified of substantiated abuse or neglect.

Sexual abuse or serious physical abuse:

Notify and provide a copy of the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol" to:

- the Chief State's Attorney, or designee, or a state attorney for the Judicial District in which the child resides or in which the abuse or neglect occurred; and
- the appropriate local law enforcement authority.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101j(a).

Abuse or neglect at an institution or facility that provides care for children and which is subject to licensure by the State of Connecticut:

Notify the state agency responsible for such licensure of the institution or facility (e.g., Department of Developmental Services) and provide records, whether or not created by DCF, concerning the investigation.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101j(b).

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Notifications to State and Municipal Agencies

(continued)

Abuse or neglect by a child care provider licensed by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC):

Notify and provide a copy of the DCF-2074, "Investigation Protocol" and related documents to the OEC Director of Child Care Licensing.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-80f.

School and Facility Notifications

Within five days of the approval of the DCF-2074 regarding a report that a child has been abused or neglected by a **public school employee**, DCF shall notify the employing superintendent and the Commissioner of the State Department of Education of the results of such investigation, whether substantiated or unsubstantiated, and shall provide records, whether or not created by DCF, concerning the investigation to the Superintendent and the Commissioner of Education.

School employee, has the same meaning as provided in Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-65 which states:

"School employee" means: (A) A teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or a private elementary, middle or high school or working in a public or private elementary, middle or high school; or (B) any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in (i) a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education, or (ii) a private elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the supervisory agent of such private school."

Note: Employees under contract may include bus drivers, janitors, or other such individuals.

Within five days of the approval of the DCF-2074 regarding a report that a child has been abused or neglected by a **private school employee** or an employee of a **public or private institution or facility caring for children**, DCF shall notify the person's employer. If the staff member or the facility is licensed or certified by a state agency, DCF shall notify the state agency issuing the license or the certificate.

Legal reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-101i.

Notification to Probate Court

If a person who is appointed by the Probate Court as a legal guardian for a child is substantiated for abuse or neglect of any child (not just the person's ward), the ISWS shall ensure that Probate Court Administration is notified within five days of the approval of the DCF-2074. The DCF-2074 shall be faxed to the Office of the Probate Court Administrator, Attn: Law Department, at 860-231-1055, for distribution to the Probate Court of jurisdiction.

Legal reference: Conn Gen. Stat. § 17a-101j(c).
