

## BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

POLICY NO.: 1.3	SUBJECT: <b>ASSESSMENTS AND INTERVIEWS</b>
OAC: 5101: 2-36-03	EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/22/04
	REVISION DATE: 7/27/04, 9/27/05, 9/07, 2/10
	REVIEW DATE: 9/27/05, 9/07, 2/10

**PURPOSE:**

To ensure that the assessment of reports of suspected abuse/neglect are thorough and accurate. The worker is responsible for creating an atmosphere which will allow the interviewee to feel comfortable in providing the needed information.

**POLICY:**

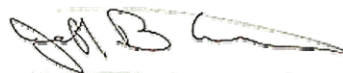
These policies are a combination of sections of the requirements set forth in Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-36-03 and agency requirements. These policies do not replace the requirements in OAC but are an outline of assessment and interviewing requirements. Workers should become familiar with the Ohio Administrative Code and refer to these policies as a quick reference.

1. The worker shall document in the case record the date, time, and with whom the assessment/investigation was initiated.
2. For all intra-familial child abuse and/or neglect reports the worker shall complete the JFS01401 "Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model-I.S., Safety Assessment" within four working days from the date the referral was screened in as a child abuse and/or neglect report. (See safety assessment and safety plan instructions).
3. The worker shall not interview the alleged child victim without parental consent, unless one of the following exigent circumstances exists:
  - (a) There is credible information indicating the child is in immediate danger of serious harm.
  - (b) 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 his/her home.
  - (c) There is credible information indicating that the child may be intimidated from discussing the alleged abuse or neglect in their home.
  - (d) The child requests to be interviewed at school or another location due to one of the circumstances listed above.
4. The worker 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 home, without parental consent or the existence of exigent circumstances as outlined above. 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.

5. If an alleged child victim is interviewed without parental consent, then the same day, the worker 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. If unsuccessful, an attempt to complete face-to-face contact shall occur once every five working days until contact is made with the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or until the agency is required to make a report disposition.
6. The worker shall conduct and document face-to-face interviews with all adults residing in the home of the alleged child victim and the alleged perpetrator (unless law enforcement or the county prosecutor will interview the alleged perpetrator pursuant to the procedures delineated in the child abuse and neglect memorandum of understanding).
7. The worker shall advise the alleged perpetrator of the allegations made against him or her at the time of the initial contact with the individual. The initial contact between the agency worker 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.
8. The worker shall conduct and document face-to-face interviews with each child residing within the home. When possible each child should be interviewed separately and apart from the perpetrator. When the worker does not interview a child residing in the home the worker shall document the justification in the record.
9. The worker shall conduct and document face-to-face interviews or telephone contacts with any person identified as possible sources of information during the assessment/investigation to obtain relevant information regarding the risk to the children. Discretion shall be exercised in the selection of collateral sources to protect the family or out-of-home care setting's right to privacy. To protect the confidentiality of the principals, persons shall not be randomly interviewed. Additional children or staff, that may have information relevant to the assessment/investigation, shall be interviewed.
10. The worker shall have an interpreter present for all interviews when the worker has determined that a principal of the case has a language or any other impairment that causes a barrier in communication (i.e., principal is deaf or hearing impaired, speaks a language other than English or is developmentally delayed or autistic). (See 10.4 Limited English Proficiency)
11. The worker shall confirm household members and complete background checks on all adults residing in the home.
12. The worker shall attempt to contact the referral source throughout the course of agency involvement if necessary to gain additional information or clarify information. The agency shall promptly disseminate upon request to the mandated reporter who makes a report of child abuse or neglect the following information:
  - Whether the agency has initiated an investigation;
  - Whether the agency is continuing to investigate;
  - Whether the agency is otherwise involved with the child who is the subject of the report;
  - The general status of the health and safety of the child who is the subject of the report;

- Whether the report has resulted in the filing of a complaint in juvenile court or in another court;
  - Identification of a designated contact person;
  - Notification of completion of investigative responsibilities;
  - Any information that would assist in service provision to the child;
- At a minimum whether requested or not, the worker shall notify the mandated reporter in writing of the completion of the investigation.
13. The worker shall complete the JFS 01400 “Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model – I.S., Family Assessment” no later than thirty days from the date the agency screened in the referral.
14. Within two working days of completion of the assessment/ investigation the worker shall do all of the following:
- (a) Notify the child in writing (unless the child is not of an age or developmental capacity to understand) and the child’s parent, guardian or custodian of the case resolution and disposition. The child’s name may be added to the parent, guardian or custodians letter.
  - (b) Notify the alleged perpetrator in writing of the case disposition and the right to appeal (See 10.7 Grievance Review Hearing).
  - (c) Refer all children under the age of three to “Help Me Grow” for early intervention services if there is a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect regardless of the child’s role in the report.
  - (d) 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”. Also see policy # 1.10 Children Born Exposed to Drugs.
  - (e) As appropriate refer any child determined not to be at risk of imminent harm for services pursuant to procedures established in rule 2-40-02 of the Ohio Administrative Code, Supportive Services for Prevention of Placement, Reunification, and Life Skills.
  - (f) Notify the child’s non-custodial parent, who holds residual parental rights to the child and maintains an ongoing relationship through visitation with the child and/or payment of child support, of the receipt of the report, the report disposition and the case decision.
15. The worker shall explain the court process to families in cases that involve juvenile court proceedings and for cases that involve criminal prosecution.

Approval Date: 3/10



Jeff Centers, Executive Director