



**Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.3**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Screening, Priority Response and Assignment of Child Protective Services Cases</b>	
<b>Procedure Change Notice:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Minor title correction throughout policy.</li> <li>◆ Section B, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet-add "Priority response for all reports begins at intake creation date/time".</li> <li>◆ Section C, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet-add "During the priority response process, original priority response time must still be met by the assigned case worker".</li> </ul>	<b>Revised:</b> 12/12/16
<b>Authority:</b>	TCA 37-1-401 et seq.; 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106; 37-5-107	
<b>Standards:</b>	<b>COA:</b> PA-CPS 4, PA-CPS 5; <b>DCS Practice Standards</b> - 5-200; 11-100; 11-101; 11-102; 11-103; 11-300A; 11-301A	
<b>Application:</b>	All Department of Children's Services (DCS) Child Protective Services (CPS) Child Abuse Hotline (CAH), and Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Employees	
<b>Policy Statement:</b>		
Reports to the CAH shall be processed to determine the need for a timely investigation, assessment, or resource linkage case within the appropriate jurisdiction.		
<b>Purpose:</b>		
To ensure reports of abuse and/or neglect are consistently processed for accurate screening decisions, track assignment and timely response.		
<b>Procedures:</b>		
<b>A. Screening and assignment</b>	<p>Using the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Child Abuse / Neglect Intake Assessment tool, Child Abuse Hotline staff determines if the information reported meets the criteria for abuse and/or neglect per TCA within twenty-four (24) hours.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reports which meet the criteria for abuse or neglect and the Alleged Child Victim (ACV) resides in Tennessee are "screened in" and assigned to the appropriate program area and county.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) New allegation(s) on a CPS case open for thirty (30) days or more, or less than thirty (30) days when the open CPS case has an approved classification, is screened in as a new CPS case and assigned according to the SDM screening decision for track and priority response.</li> <li>b) New allegation(s) on a CPS case open less than thirty (30) days are screened in for a new CPS case when the new allegation's screening</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

	<p>decision for track assignment is different than the open CPS case. The priority response is determined by the new allegation’s screening decision, not the status of the already open CPS case.</p> <p>c) If the new allegation is a death or preliminary near death but not related to the incident that initiated the already open CPS case, a new case is opened, regardless of the timeframe of the already open case.</p> <p>d) If the alleged child victim is hospitalized, a notation will be inserted into the referral that indicates the CPS worker or supervisor will contact the hospital within twenty-four (24) hours of the intake. The Child Abuse Hotline (CAH) will page the county on weekends and holidays to ensure timely notification is provided.</p> <p>2. Reports which do not meet the criteria for abuse or neglect are screened out and documented in <b>TFACTS</b> (Refer to <a href="#">Work Aid 1</a>).</p> <p>a) Duplicate reports containing the same information, regardless of the reporter are screened out and processed. Notification is sent to the assigned CPS worker via email and documented on the intake narrative box in <b>TFACTS</b>.</p> <p>b) New allegation(s) of a CPS case open for less than thirty (30) days (without an approved classification) is screened out and processed when the open CPS case is the same track assignment as the new allegations, as determined by the SDM tool. The new allegation(s) is added to the open CPS case by the assigned <b>case manager case worker</b>. The screening decision also includes a suggested priority response timeframe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Notification of the new allegation(s) and suggested priority response is sent to the appropriate <b>CPS</b> supervisor and assigned <b>case manager case worker</b> via email and documented on the intake narrative box in <b>TFACTS</b>.</li> </ul> <p>c) If the abuse and/or neglect occurred in Tennessee and the ACV resides outside of Tennessee or will not return within the timeframe to complete a CPS case or offer services to the child, regardless of the <b>AP’s alleged perpetrators’</b> access to the ACV, allegations are screened out. The allegations are referred to local law enforcement and the child welfare agency where the child is located.</p> <p>d) If a report is screened out, but involves other investigative or licensure agencies (e.g., law enforcement, DHS daycare, DMH/DIDD licensed facilities, DCS licensure) Hotline staff notifies the appropriate agency no later than the next business day. The name of the agency notified is documented on the appropriate screens in <b>TFACTS</b>.</p>
<p><b>B. Priority Response</b></p>	<p>Priority responses are assigned to reports to determine the timeframe in which the ACV must be seen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Priority response for all reports begins at intake creation date/time.</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Central Time Zone vs. Eastern Time Zone: The case worker records the response time in <b>TFACTS</b> using <u>local time</u> regardless of the Time Zone to which the report is assigned.</i></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Priority-1 (P-1): Cases assigned this priority are initiated by a face-to-face contact with the ACV no later than twenty-four (24) hours, but immediately if the <b>CPS</b> supervisor deems it necessary. Priority 1 reports allege that children may be in imminent danger.</li> <li>2. Priority-2 (P-2): Cases assigned this priority are initiated by face-to-face contact with the ACV within two (2) business days. Priority-2 reports allege injuries or risk of injuries that are not imminent, life threatening or do not require immediate medical care where a two (2) business day delay will not compromise the investigative effort or reduce the chances for identifying the level of risk to the child.</li> <li>3. Priority-3 (P-3): Cases assigned this priority are initiated by face-to-face contact with the ACV within three (3) business days. Priority-3 reports allege situations/incidents considered to pose low risk of harm to the child where three (3) business days will not compromise the investigative effort or reduce the chances for identifying the level of risk to the child.</li> <li>4. Refer to <a href="#">Protocol: Priority Response Definitions/Examples</a> for a listing of allegations of harm under each priority response.</li> <li>5. When a report is determined to be a P-1, Hotline staff notifies the <b>CPS</b> supervisor by e-mail, page, or phone of the emergency report.</li> </ol>
<p><b>C. Reconsideration procedures</b></p>	<p>Track and priority response assignments may be reconsidered for alternate assignments (refer to <a href="#">Work Aid 8- Child Protective Services Requests for Reconsiderations</a>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>During the priority response process, original priority response time must still be met by the assigned case worker.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>D. Case assignment based on jurisdiction</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reports alleging severe abuse are assigned as follows:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To an investigator in the county where the alleged abuse occurred; or</li> <li>b) To an investigator in the county where the child resides, if it is not clear where the alleged abuse occurred.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Reports alleging non-severe abuse are assigned to the county where the child resides.</li> <li>3. If the report involves abuse or neglect that allegedly occurred in another state and the alleged victim is physically presently in the state of Tennessee at the time the report is received, the case is assigned in the county where the child is visiting/residing in Tennessee.</li> <li>4. Requests for courtesy response by an out of state agency is processed by the CAH and assigned to the appropriate jurisdiction. CAH staff obtains the child’s name, address and all information relative to the request for courtesy case work activities. Courtesy case responses are documented in <b>TFACTS</b>.</li> <li>5. Allegations of child abuse or neglect involving non-custodial children under the supervision or care of an individual or individuals functioning in an official employment or volunteer capacity at the time of the incident; such as licensed day care facilities, licensed child care agencies, unlicensed daycare facilities if the facility should be licensed (such as a daycare with more than four (4)</li> </ol>

	<p>children, excluding biological children toward the four (4), schools, religious organizations or youth groups are investigated by SIU. SIU investigates allegations of child abuse or neglect of biological, foster, or adoptive children residing in a foster home. Reports to Special Investigations Unit (SIU) are handled as outlined in DCS Policy <a href="#">14.25, Special Investigations</a>.</p>
<p><b>E. Allegations of sexual abuse only involving children</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assigned allegations of sexual abuse involving two or more children who are twelve (12) years old or under and are from different families are separated by family with each child listed as an Alleged Child Victim and the alleged perpetrator listed as unknown.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Children twelve (12) years old or under who are alleged to have used force, threat or coercion during the incident, or attempted to prevent communication of the incident may be identified as an alleged perpetrator.</li> <li>b) A child who is thirteen (13) or older and has a developmental or intellectual disability should not be initially identified as an alleged perpetrator until further information is collected regarding their disability.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. The CAH includes any information that suggests a child as an aggressor in the reported allegation.</li> <li>4. During the course of an investigation, a child may be identified as an alleged perpetrator based on information collected.</li> </ol>
<p><b>F. Documenting/ gathering information on Native American ancestry</b></p>	<p>CAH staff inquires if there is any Native American lineage or ancestry that might make the child/family eligible for membership in any Native American Tribe.</p>

<p><b>Forms:</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>CS-0680, Child Protective Services Intake</u></a></p>
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<b>Collateral Documents:</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Priority Response Definitions/Examples</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>DCS Policy 14.5 CPS: Locating Child and Family</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>DCS Policy 14.25, Special Investigations</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>DCS Policy 16.24 Children of Native American Heritage</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>DCS Policy 14.29, Ongoing Non-Custodial Worker Responsibilities</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>DCS Policy 20.27 Child Death-Near Death Rapid Response</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Work Aid 1- CPS Categories and Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Work Aid 8- Child Protective Services Requests for Reconsiderations</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Protocol for Working with Hospitals</u></a></p>
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<b>Glossary:</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Initiated</b>	The act of contacting or meeting with the victim or family for a face-to-face interview (CPS).
<b>Multiple reports</b>	New allegations received by the CAH on already open CPS investigations or assessments.
<b>Priority Response</b>	Priority response is assigned to reports of alleged abuse/neglect to determine the timeframe in which an investigation or assessment is initiated. (See <i>Section B</i> above for definitions and time requirements for initiating a face-to-face contact with the alleged victim.)
<b>Structured Decision Making (SDM) Child Abuse/Neglect Screening Criteria</b>	The SDM Intake Assessment Tool guides CAH staff on making a determination of whether a report meets DCS policy for a child abuse/neglect investigation, assessment or resource linkage and the timeframe in which to respond to those reports that are assigned as an investigation or assessment. Decisions are made immediately upon receipt of all available information pertaining to a report, but no later than within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of a report, unless the CAH supervisor decides that more time is needed to gather information.
<b>Residence of the Child</b>	The location of the primary caretaker. If the family is homeless or the primary residence cannot be determined, the residence may be the last known location of the child, or temporary living arrangement (e.g. hotel, or motel).