

## 14.7, Multi-Disciplinary Team: Child Protective Investigative Team

**Application:** All Department of Children's Services (DCS) Child Protective Services (CPS) staff, including the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Supervisors

**Authority:** TCA: 37-1-401 et seq.; 37-1-601 et seq.; 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106; 37-5-107; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as amended, see 42 USC 5101 et seq.; 42 USC 5116 et seq., and 45 CFR 1340.

**Standards:** COA PA-CFS 3.02; 4-7

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### Glossary:

- ◆ Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT)
  - A legally mandated multi-disciplinary team that conducts an investigation of alleged sexual abuse or other severe child abuse.
- ◆ CPS Supervisor
  - All levels of direct CPS management from the Team Leader, up to and including the Commissioner of the Department of Children's Services.

### Policy Statement:

The Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT) serves as the statutorily mandated Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) in Tennessee. The Department of Children's Services uses the MDT approach during investigations of severe child abuse to ensure completion of a strategic and thorough investigation, as well as providing child victims with the needed supports to ensure their safety.

### Purpose:

To identify the composition of the CPIT and establish the role and responsibilities of DCS in the CPIT process.

### Procedures:

#### A. CPIT Composition

1. Each team shall be composed the following Child Welfare professionals:
  - a) One staff member from DCS Child Protective Services (CPS);

- b) One representative from the Office of the District Attorney General;
  - c) One juvenile court officer or investigator from a court of competent jurisdiction;
  - d) One law enforcement officer with county-wide jurisdiction from the county where the child resides or where the alleged abuse occurred; and
  - e) The Director of the Children's Advocacy Center, or designee.
2. The team may also include the following individuals:
- a) A representative from the medical field;
  - b) A representative from the mental health field; or
  - c) Other members as appropriate and identified by CPIT.

**B. Convening CPIT and Developing Case Strategy**

1. CPS immediately convenes the appropriate CPIT, per local CPIT protocols, when a report of child sexual or severe abuse has been received or identified through casework.
2. The CPS Case Manager follows local protocols for submitting written documentation notifying the District Attorney of a case alleging sexual abuse or severe child abuse within three (3) days of convening CPIT.
3. The CPIT determines investigative tasks and assigns responsibilities to team members when convening CPIT.
4. The CPIT determines immediate safety risks to the Alleged Child victims (ACV) or other children.

**C. CPIT Strategy**

1. During the CPIT meetings the team shall discuss and determine:
  - a) The Alleged Child Victim's (ACV) family composition and demographics, including which person(s) is responsible for the ACV's welfare and if there are other

children in the care of that person.

- b) Whether any other child(ren) is the victim of child abuse or neglect.
    - ◆ If any other child(ren) is the victim of child abuse or neglect, the child is added as a victim in the Electronic Record System.
  - c) The person(s) responsible for causing the abuse.
  - d) Whether long-term risks to the ACV and/or other children are present.
  - e) What services are necessary to safeguard the ACV and to preserve and stabilize family life.
2. With approval of the CPS Supervisor, DCS investigative tasks may be delegated or delayed in the following situations:
- a) There are no identified safety concerns for the ACV or other children in the household and a law enforcement agency, District Attorney, or Medical Examiner's office has requested that CPS delay and/or refrain from interviewing certain individuals to preserve or enhance a criminal investigation.
  - b) CPIT members are permitted to request that CPS case activities be completed in a certain order or timeframe to support the criminal investigation or court process.

**D. Classification of CPIT Cases**

- 1. The CPS Case Manager reviews the case with their supervisor and determines that all relevant information is included and documented in the case recordings in the Electronic Record System.
- 2. The CPS Case Manager is prepared to present and discuss the case with the CPIT members when the case is on the CPIT schedule. To prepare for the meeting, the investigator will do the following:
  - a) Discuss the case with their supervisor or their designee.
  - b) Prepare documentation to share with CPIT members attending the meeting.

- c) Review the [Protocol for Child Protective Investigative Team \(CPIT\) Presentation for the Office of Child Safety Investigative Staff](#).
3. The CPS Case Manager discusses the information gathered during the investigation and the recommended DCS classification(s) with all members of the CPIT.
4. Each CPIT member indicates their agreement or disagreement with the investigation classification recommended by DCS on [CS-0561, Child Protective Investigative Team Review](#) and is provided the opportunity to sign the CPIT form.
5. Any CPIT member's concerns about classification are noted on the CPIT form, and the CPS Case Manager documents the CPIT discussion and classification in case recordings in the Electronic Record System.
6. Should DCS disagree with the classification decision made by the CPIT and wish to overturn the CPIT decision, the CPIT information will be provided to the DCS Regional Director, who will review the decision.
  - a) If the DCS Regional Director believes the CPIT has made an error in their classification decision, the Regional Director, with approval from their chain of command, may appeal the decision to the DCS Deputy Commissioner for Regional Operations.
  - b) If an appeal is approved to proceed, the Deputy Commissioner for Regional Operations will review the investigative evidence and determine a final classification decision within 10 (ten) business days.
    - ◆ Should the Deputy Commissioner uphold the CPIT classification decision, the Deputy Commissioner's decision will be final with no further review.
  - c) If the Deputy Commissioner for Regional Operations agrees to overturn the CPIT decision, the Deputy Commissioner will forward this decision and recommended classification to the DCS Commissioner for final approval. The DCS Commissioner's decision is final, and no further review will be conducted.

Forms:

[CS-0561, Child Protective Investigative Team Review](#)

Collateral Documents:

[\*Protocol for Child Protective Investigative Team \(CPIT\) Presentation for the Office of Child Safety Investigative Staff\*](#)