

1186 INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE/NEGLECT IN FOSTER HOMES

Chapter: **Child Protective Field Services**

Section: **CPS Family Assessments**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **08-03**

Effective Date: **May 2008**

Scheduled Review Date:

Approved:

Handwritten signature of Maggie Bishop in black ink.

Maggie Bishop, DCYF Director

Related Statute(s): **[RSA 169-C](#), and [RSA 170-E](#)**

Related Admin Rule(s):

Related Federal Regulation(s):

Related Form(s): **FORM 2212**

Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

DCYF is committed to investigating alleged maltreatment of children in foster care in a manner which will be the least intrusive to the foster family while assuring that quality foster family care services are being provided to children and their families in the community.

Policy

- I. The DCYF Central Intake Unit receives reports alleging child abuse/neglect in foster homes. [Credible reports](#) are sent via NH BRIDGES to the DCYF Special Investigations Unit.
- II. Reports alleging foster family care licensing violations, which do not involve child abuse and/or neglect, are forwarded via NH BRIDGES to the DCYF Licensing CPSW who will address the issues with the foster parents.
- III. Reports alleging child abuse/neglect in a foster home by a third party perpetrator are referred by intake to the Special Investigations Unit via BRIDGES.
- IV. Reports alleging any criminal act involving a child in a foster home are reported to law enforcement, per RSA 169-C: 38, by the DCYF Special Investigations Unit.
- V. The victim and other children living in the foster home, regardless of the relationship to the foster parents may be interviewed by staff from the DCYF Special Investigations Unit, as needed, to complete the investigation and to ensure the safety of the children in the home. Children who no longer live in the foster home may also be interviewed by Special Investigation Unit (SIU), as needed, to complete the investigation.
- VI. Any child living in the foster home is interviewed, as needed, without prior notice to the foster parents, if there is reason to believe that notification would increase the risk of harm to the child or children. The CPSW for the child is notified prior to interview and offered the opportunity to be present for the interview if at all possible
- VII. The foster parent is notified verbally and via the "Notification of Investigation" (Form 2212) by SIU after the investigation has been initiated and the child's safety has been assured.
- VIII. The foster parent is provided with information regarding FIRST (First Initial Response Support Team).

- IX. Verbal notice is given to the Licensing CPSW and/or Supervisor and any CPSW/JPPO and/or Supervisor responsible for a child in the foster home under investigation. This is followed up in writing.
- X. A child is removed from a foster home, which is being investigated, when:
 - A. The child has been seriously harmed by a foster parent;
 - B. The child has not been protected from foreseeable harm by a foster parent;
 - C. The Special Investigations Unit staff determines that a severe level of risk or threat of harm exists for the child;
 - D. The child requests removal from the foster home;
 - E. The foster parent requests removal of the child; or
 - F. There is reason to believe that continued placement of the child in the foster home will interfere with the investigation.
- XI. SIU staff must interview the Foster parents, and other members of the foster home; consideration should be given to including the Licensing CPSW in the interview with the foster parents.
- XII. The alleged perpetrator of the child abuse/neglect must be interviewed by the Special Investigations Unit staff if he or she is a member of, employed by, or has frequently visited the foster home, consideration must be given to including law enforcement.
- XIII. The foster parents and the Licensing CPSW are notified verbally and in writing of the outcome of the investigation within 60 days after a determination has been made.
 - A. When the investigations outcome is determined to be "Unfounded", the assigned Licensing CPSW must note this in the foster parent record. Concerns, which indicate licensing violations or inappropriate treatment of a child, are to be addressed by the Licensing CPSW with the foster parents. The Licensing Supervisor makes the decision as to retention of the notation in the foster parent record.
 - B. When the investigation's outcome is determined to be "Founded", the children in the foster home MUST be protected. Foster parents may be limited or prohibited from contact with the foster child. The assigned Licensing CPSW must note this finding in the foster parent record and take administrative action appropriate to the severity of the child abuse/neglect finding. The notation of the "Founded" report becomes a permanent part of the foster parent record.

Procedures

- I. The SIU CPSW must investigate assigned assessments of alleged child abuse and neglect occurring in Foster Family Homes, determine the child's immediate safety needs, determine on-going risk of maltreatment and coordinate services to secure the child's safety within a 60 day timeframe by:
 - A. Open [SDM Assessment Packet](#) on assessments as deemed necessary by the SIU Supervisor.
 - B. Notify the Licensing CPSW and/or Supervisor or the Child Placing Agency social worker assigned to the foster home which is subject of the report;

- C. Consult with the CPS Supervisor or Juvenile Services Supervisor regarding the possible removal of children from the foster home;
- D. Report severe abuse/neglect, sexual abuse or assault to law enforcement;
- E. Request that the assigned CPSW or JPPO move the child or children from the foster home under investigation if the criteria in part X of the policy are met;
- F. Notify the foster parents by personal contact and in writing via the "Notification of Investigation" (Form 2212) after the safety of the child or children has been assured, that an investigation of their home is being conducted;
- G. [Interview the victim](#) and document this contact in the BRIDGES Case Contact Log
- H. Interview the foster parent and all other household members and any other individuals named in connection with the incident and documenting these contacts on the BRIDGES Case Contact Log
- I. May interview children placed in the home previously if there is indication that they may have been exposed to maltreatment;
- J. Call the reporter at the onset and the conclusion of the investigation and document this contact on BRIDGES Case Contact Log;
- K. Contact at least two [collaterals](#) and document this on BRIDGES Case contact Log
- L. Review all prior assessments and/or cases involving the victim and/or the foster family.
- M. Review any ["additional information"](#) received during the course of the assessment and document on BRIDGES case contact log how this information was addressed
- N. Complete the Assessment Findings Screen on BRIDGES, including a review of the prior reports associated with the child and foster family.
- O. Complete the "Case Connect" screen on BRIDGES
- P. Complete the Assessment Close Screen on BRIDGES to include the final closing write up that includes the number of prior reports and their determinations, the outcome of this investigation and a clear and precise explanation of the assessment and why the determination was made.
- Q. Use radio buttons on BRIDGES to indicate whether there is [domestic violence](#) substance abuse, and physical or mental health impairments of the foster parent and/or child/ren.
- R. Document if any referrals were made and what these referrals were.
- S. Notify the assigned CPSW or JPPO and Licensing CPSW of the investigation's outcome within 60 days of the report;
- T. Notify the foster parents in writing of the outcome of the investigation at completion, no more than 60 days of the report

- U. Notify the foster parents and Licensing CPSW if there is evidence of licensing violations or inappropriate treatment of a child in foster care;
 - V. Provide Family Service CPSW with recommendations for the treatment of the child as necessary;
 - W. Provide the Licensing CPSW with recommendations that may be included in a corrective action plan as necessary;
 - X. Document the foster family and professional reporter contact to inform them of the status of the investigation.
 - Y. Document (if any) the apparent and clinically diagnosed disabilities and special needs of all household members.
 - Z. For children who are placed in the home by another child placing agency, notification will be made to the child's Case manager and request that appropriate action be taken to protect the child as necessary;
 - AA. Retain the record of the investigation at State Office as required by RSA 169-C:35.
- II. The Family Services CPSW or JPPO must:
- A. Share background information about the child and/or the foster parents with the SIU CPSW;
 - B. Provide notification to the child's parents of the allegations within 5 working days of the initiation of the investigation, as well as notification of the outcome upon each investigation's completion;
 - C. Upon request and in agreement with their supervisor and the supervisor of SIU, move the child or children from the foster home which is under investigation;
 - D. Make no new placements of children in the foster home during the investigation;
 - E. Authorize treatment and/or counseling for the child as needed;
 - F. Inform the Supervisor of the outcome of the investigation and discuss the return of the child to the foster home as appropriate; and
 - G. Provide notification to the court of jurisdiction of the investigation and its outcome.
- III. The Licensing CPSW must:
- A. Inform the Supervisor of the investigation;
 - B. Cooperate with the SIU CPSW by providing background information about the child and/or the foster parents,
 - C. Make no recommendations for placement of children in the foster home during the investigation,
 - D. File notification of the investigation's outcome in the foster home record;

- E. Assist the foster parents in preparing a written corrective action plan within 30 days of the investigation's outcome, if necessary; and
 - F. Revoke the license of the foster home, if necessary.
- IV. The foster parent must:
- A. Report suspected child abuse/neglect of any child to the Intake Unit;
 - B. Cooperate with DCYF staff during the investigation;
 - C. Not accept a child from any source during the investigation; and
 - D. Participate in a corrective action plan, if necessary;
- V. The foster parent may:
- A. Request to review the foster home record;
 - B. Consult with an attorney at their own expense; and
 - C. Appeal the finding through the Administrative Appeals Unit as necessary.