

1202 INTERVIEWING SIBLINGS AND NON-OFFENDING PARENT/CAREGIVER

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, Director

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

Related Admin Rule(s):

Related Federal Regulation(s):

Related Form(s): **FORM 2218 and FORM 2257**

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

Purpose

To describe the process and requirements of assessing referrals of child abuse and neglect. The primary goal of the assessment process is to ensure the safety of the child(ren).

Policy

- I. The primary concern when meeting with the family is to assure the safety of the child(ren) and to help the family resolve any safety concerns that may be affecting the overall well being of the child. All household members must be included in the assessment process, to the fullest extent possible.
- II. In situations where [domestic violence](#) is a co-occurring factor, the CPSW must prepare their interviews in order to protect the alleged victim of the domestic violence and the children.
- III. During the assessment, the CPSW needs to use discretion and professional judgment in the relationship with the child and family. The CPSW must keep well-documented and accurate records based on factual observations.
- IV. Goals of the initial family meeting include:
 - A. Determine the safety of the child;
 - B. Initiate a relationship with the family;
 - C. Assess the validity of the referral; and
 - D. Identify immediate service needs.
- V. The CPSW must identify themselves and state that an assessment has been received concerning the child(ren). DCYF has legal authority to inquire into possible child abuse or neglect (RSA 169-C: 34 II, & IV). The CPSW must explain the role of the CPSW in offering assistance and recognize the parent's rights and responsibilities to be treated with respect and dignity and their right to a comprehensive assessment.
- VI. The CPSW shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect assessment:

- A. Advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against them in a manner that is consistent with state law which protects the identity of the person who made the referral (RSA 170-G:8-a); and
 - B. Provide the individual(s) with a copy of the Family Rights Brochure (Form 2257) and a copy of the Assessment brochure (Form 2218).
- VII. The individual must sign both sections of Form 2257. The CPSW leaves the brochure with the individual and takes the signed tear off section, which is stapled to the case file inside cover. If the person refuses to sign the brochure, the CPSW must document in the case contact log in Bridges their efforts to give the brochure to the individual and to have the individual sign it.
- VIII. Supervisory consultation must be sought if parents refuse to allow entrance into the home and/or refuse to discuss this situation and there is reason to believe the child is at risk. DCYF may seek the assistance of the courts and/or through a police officer to gain access to the child. If there is a decision not to seek the assistance of the court or law enforcement agency, the assigned CPSW must document in the Bridges contact log the reason assistance was not sought.
- IX. The CPSW must meet with all children within the household (RSA 169-C:34, II). Any exceptions to seeing all other children must be approved by the Supervisor and documented by the CPSW in the Bridges contact log stating the efforts made to accomplish these visits and reasons why they were not made.
- X. Allow family members to discuss their problems while guiding them to consider the current situation. Help them to focus on the content of the referral, specifically how the child is cared for, rather than on the person or agency who made the report.
- XI. The following information should be gathered and documented in Bridges by the CPSW:
- A. Factual information about the family: such as names, addresses, dates of birth, gender, occupations of immediate family members and all household members, existence of extended family, and their ability to act as a resource; (RSA 169-C: 34, II)
 - B. A discussion of the child and family's needs which must be met to assure the health and safety of the child;
 - C. Strengths of the family;
 - D. Presence and/or history of domestic violence and/or substance abuse, mental health issues, disabilities and serious illness recognizing that these issues can have a severe effect on children. (Determining the extent of the effects is critical when assessing overall safety issues. When documenting safety plans of family members involved in domestic violence, the CPSW must not include the locations and addresses of potential "safe places" that the family members may use in a crisis situation.)
 - E. For families in which [domestic violence](#) is a factor, the alleged victim of domestic violence must be given information about the Domestic Violence Specialist (DVS), including their telephone number. In these situations the CPSW will seek a safe method for the DVS to contact the alleged victim of the domestic violence. This should not be done in the presence of the alleged batterer as it may compromise the family's safety.
 - F. Information in regards to the family's socioeconomic needs such as their need for financial assistance, shelter, food, medical or dental care, childcare, etc.

- G. Any apparent disabilities or special needs of the child(ren) or other household members disabilities shall be documented on the Assessment Closure Screen on Bridges along with any actions taken or recommendations made in response to the these needs. Clinically diagnosed disabilities must be documented in the Service/Removal screen of Bridges;
 - H. Ways in which the children and family interact with each other and within their community;
 - I. The family's connections to other agencies that show the family's relationships with other providers.
 - J. Any historical data about the parent's upbringing that impact their beliefs about child rearing and appropriate childhood behaviors, including the impact child maltreatment may have had on their parenting abilities and styles.
 - K. If a household member is an observer and not involved with direct child rearing, discuss observations and what support, if any, the household member offers to the family.
 - L. The family's perceptions of the report, the CPSW's perceptions, and notations of any discrepancies.
- XII. When law enforcement is involved in a joint investigation, the CPSW should consult with them prior to interviewing the person identified as responsible for the alleged abuse and/or neglect (perpetrator).