

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services  
Children and Youth Division  
Policy and Procedure Guide

Effective August 30, 2004

**TO:** All CYD Social Work Staff

**FROM:** John McGee, Deputy Commissioner, Children and Youth

**RE:** Updated Policy and Procedure for Assigning and Responding to Reports of Abuse or Neglect

The purpose of this guide is to transmit clarified, changed and/or new policy and procedures for responding to reports.

**Key effects:**

**Clarifications:**

- Time frame for responding to Response Priority 2 CPS and E-GPS reports.
- Time frames for flow of Response Priority 1 and 2 reports from Information, Assessment and Referral Services (IARS) to assigned supervisor and worker.
- Supervisor's responsibilities.
- Social worker's responsibilities.
- Responsibilities of non-social work staff.

**Changes:**

- Time frames for flow of Response Priority 3 reports from IARS to assigned supervisor and worker.

**Additions:**

- Assignment and initiation of investigation for reports taken after regular business hours.
- Making additional contact attempts within the response time frames.
- Responsibility for assignment of overflow cases.
- Record room responsibilities.
- Review of FACTS and existing case record.
- Use of after-hours Hotline to make additional contacts.

**Except for the changes noted above, all requirements of current policy regarding assigning and responding to reports of abuse and neglect remain in effect.**

**POLICY: Information, Assessment and Referral Services**

It is the responsibility of IARS, Hotline and Screening to be available to accept and process reports of child abuse and neglect 24 hours per day, seven days per week. It is also the responsibility of IARS to accept and process reports of student abuse (SAR) and general requests for service.

Processing includes determining whether to accept the report for investigation/assessment; determining the type of report; assigning a risk tag and response priority; and forwarding the report to Intake or the Family Service Region for assignment to a social worker.

When a report is accepted for investigation/assessment, an initial determination of risk to the child is made by Hotline/Screening based on the Screening Risk Factors.

Response priorities are:

- **Response Priority 1:** immediate response. (CPS and E-GPS reports designated as emergencies)
- **Response Priority 2:** 24-hour response. 24 hours begins when the Hotline receives the report; the time is noted on the front of the referral form. (the response for all other CPS reports and those E-GPS reports designated as requiring a 24 hour response).
- **Response Priority 3:** non-24 hour response (the response for all Student Abuse Reports (SAR), and all non-protective requests for service and GPS reports not designated as Response Priority 1 or 2).

The Response Priority and Risk Tag drive all initial activity on the investigation or assessment.

All reports taken during regular working hours will be delivered by IARS to the Intake Case Assigner, Repeat Abuse Unit Administrator or responsible social work supervisor immediately after appropriate clearances and logging have been completed.

All reports taken after regular working hours, will be delivered by IARS to the Intake Case Assigner immediately the next working day, and to the Repeat Abuse Unit Administrator or responsible social work supervisor by 10:30 AM the next working day.

Any after-hours report that is designated Response Priority 1, and any report designated Response Priority 2 where the next day is not a regular business day, requires the Hotline to make initial contact, assure the safety of the child/ren, and complete preliminary investigative activity.

*Procedures*

*The risk tag and response priority are based on child factors, perpetrator access, family environment, the nature of the allegations, and the ranking of the report as being a Child Protective Service (CPS) report, emergency General Protective Service (E-GPS) report, General Protective Service (GPS) report, Student Abuse Report (SAR) or general request for service reports. These factors drive the response priority given to the report.*

*The Hotline will clear the report in FACTS to determine whether the family is currently receiving services or was previously active with the Department.*

- *Results of the FACTS clearance will be attached to the referral that is delivered to the assigned supervisor.*
- *Any contact, safety assessment, safety plan and preliminary investigative activity by the Hotline will be documented on case progress notes and forwarded with the referral.*

## **POLICY: Intake Assignment**

It is the responsibility of the Intake Case Assignment Administrator to assign reports directed to Intake within the time frames indicated by the Response Priority.

Any report designated Response Priority 1 or 2 that is taken during regular working hours will be delivered by the Intake Case assigner to the social work supervisor immediately after appropriate logging has been completed.

Any report designated Response Priority 1 or 2 that is taken after regular working hours will be delivered by the Intake Case assigner to the social work supervisor by 10:30 a.m. on the day it is received by the Intake Case assigner.

Any report that is designated Response Priority 3 will be delivered by the Intake Case assigner to the

investigating or responsible social work supervisor within two (2) working days.

*Procedures*

*The assignment of Response Priority 3 reports are prioritized based on the allegations and risk tag, so that the most serious reports are assigned first.*

*If it appears that the number of Response Priority 3 reports will preclude assignment to an Intake supervisor within the timeframes, the Intake Case Assignment Administrator will alert the Intake Director or alternate who will develop and implement a plan for assigning overflow.*

*The Record Room will provide the assigned supervisor with any existing record as soon as possible but not later than the first 24 hours after a report is received by the Hotline.*

**POLICY: Supervisor's responsibilities regarding Initial contact**

It is the supervisor's responsibility to support the social worker's efforts, listed under social worker's responsibilities below, to see the child(ren) within the time frames indicated by the response priority.

- When a worker is in the midst of an investigation, a supervisor must make him/herself available to provide supervision and assistance to workers in the unit, or ensure that an alternate supervisor or social work administrator is aware that the worker is in the field, and is available to provide supervision and assistance.
  - After-hours Hotline supervisors will provide supervision and assistance for unforeseen emergencies or supervision needs.
  - A Director on-call is always available after hours for additional assistance.
- For Response Priorities 1 and 2, the supervisor must ensure that the assigned worker, or a covering worker, is able to make a first visit to see the subject child(ren) quickly enough that, if unsuccessful, the worker is able to make a **second attempt** to have face-to-face contact within the first **24 hours** after the report is received by the Hotline.
- For Response Priority 3 GPS reports, the supervisor must ensure that the social worker makes a visit to see all subject child(ren) and assesses safety within **seven (7) working days of receipt of the report by the Hotline.**

*Procedures*

*In assigning any report, the supervisor will ensure that contact requirements will be met. For Response Priority 1 and 2 reports, the supervisor will review and assign the report immediately upon receipt. For Response Priority 3 reports, the social work supervisor will review and assign the report within two (2) working days of receipt of the report from Hotline/Screening.*

- *After exhausting resources within his/her unit and his/her alternate supervisor's unit, the social work supervisor, through the social work administrator, may request that the after-hours Hotline staff make contact for Response Priority 1 and 2 reports.*

*Ensure that a social worker sees the child(ren) at times and locations with the highest probability of success. The supervisor should discuss with the worker the probability of locating the child at particular places and times, such as school during school hours.*

**POLICY: Social Worker's Responsibilities Regarding Initial Contact:<sup>1</sup>**

At the time of the first contact, and throughout the investigation, the social worker is to assess, assure and document the safety of all the children in the home.

- If the reporter is known, the assigned social worker will call the reporter and try to obtain

<sup>1</sup> CYD Policy Manual § 3110

additional information. This is particularly important if the names or addresses of the subjects of the report are not known.

- For any report designated Response Priority 1, the assigned worker will see all subject child(ren) and assess safety **immediately**.
- For any report designated Response Priority 2, the social worker will see all subject child(ren) and assess safety as soon as possible within the first **24 hours** of the receipt of the report by the Hotline.
- For any GPS report designated Response Priority 3, the social worker will see all subject child(ren) and assess safety within **seven (7) working days of receipt of the report by the Hotline**.
- If the child(ren) cannot be seen on the first visit, **additional visits** must be made:
  - within the first 24 hours after the receipt of the report by the Hotline for Response Priorities 1 and 2, or
  - within 2 working days of the unsuccessful visit for Response Priority 3 GPS reports.
- After a second unsuccessful visit, additional attempts must continue to be made in consultation with the supervisor and consistent with the requirements of the policy on Locating Children and Families.

*Procedures*

*If time permits, review any previous investigative and service activity in FACTS and any existing case record before the initial attempt at contact is made. Information in FACTS or any existing record may be crucial in determining risk to children and helpful in locating a hard-to-find family.*

*Contact with the reporter could uncover information related to possible ages of the children, schools the children might attend, times that they are likely to be at home, whether the home is a house or apartment, anything that would indicate a safety risk to the social worker or that might indicate that police assistance is needed.*

*For assistance working hours and on weekends, if the Hotline cannot be reached for any reason, the on-call Director can be reached by dialing the City Hall operator at 215-686-5665.*

Questions regarding this Policy and Procedure Guide may be addressed to:

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