

**CLINTON COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES  
FOSTER CARE PROGRAM  
POLICY ON INVESTIGATIONS OF ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT  
INVOLVING A FAMILY FOSTER HOME**

Clinton County Job and Family Services has established the following guidelines when investigating allegations of abuse and/or neglect involving a family foster home.

- A. Clinton County Job and Family Services will conduct investigations of all reports of alleged child abuse or neglect in out-of-home care settings involving a family foster home and shall:
1. Immediately contact the out-of-home care setting administrative officer, director or other chief administrative officer (or the board of directors, county commissioners, or law enforcement if the administrative officer, director or other chief administrative officer is alleged to be the perpetrator) in order to:
    - a. Share information regarding the report;
    - b. Determine responsibility for informing the parents, guardian, or custodian of the alleged child victim;
    - c. Discuss what actions have been taken to protect the alleged child victim; and
    - d. Provide information about the investigative activities that will follow.
  2. Attempt to coordinate the interview of the alleged child victim when another agency is required by statute or administrative rule to conduct its own assessment to address issues other than child abuse or neglect (i.e., internal management or licensure issues,) when at all possible. Note: Third party investigations will be conducted for all investigations involving reports of abuse or neglect in Clinton County Job and Family Services' family foster homes or other similar out-of-home care settings to ensure they are handled in a professional and unbiased manner. However, an assessment conducted independently by another agency (including a third party investigation conducted by law enforcement) does not relieve Clinton County Job and Family Services of its responsibility for conducting an investigation in accordance with this rule.
  3. Interview but not exclusively:
    - a. The alleged child victim(s);
    - b. All children or adults who are witnesses of the abuse and neglect; and
    - c. Children or adults who are collateral sources of significant information. Discretion shall be exercised in the selection of collateral sources to protect the out-of-home care setting's right to

privacy. Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit in interviews of additional children or staff.

4. Comply with rules 5101:2-34-32 and 5101:2-34-33 of the Administrative Code.
  5. Contact the administrator or designee of the out-of-home care setting and the appropriate licensing and supervising authorities, pursuant to paragraph (C) of rule 5101:2-34-35 of the Administrative Code, to share information in accordance with rule 5101-2-34-38 of the Administrative Code upon completion of the investigation. As outlined, the agency shall notify ODJFS and its children services' licensing section of the details of said investigation and will provide them with records, rule violation reports, etc. accordingly upon completion of the investigation.
- B. At the completion of the investigation, but no later than thirty days after receipt of the report (forty-five days when a component of the investigation cannot be completed within thirty days and the reasons are documented in the case record,) the agency shall complete a case disposition pursuant to paragraph (T) of rule 5101:2-34-32 of the Administrative Code. The case summary shall include at a minimum:
1. Statements that support the case disposition.
  2. The nature, extent, and circumstances surrounding the alleged abuse or neglect;
  3. The alleged child victim's ability and need to protect himself.
  4. The caretaker's ability and willingness to protect the alleged child victim;
  5. The access of the alleged perpetrator to the alleged child victim;
  6. The nature of the interaction of the alleged child victim with the caretaker and, if appropriate, the alleged perpetrator;
  7. The strengths and concerns of the family or out-of-home care setting pertaining to the care of children; and
  8. The condition of the alleged child victim and, when applicable, other children residing in or participating in activities in the out-of-home care setting;
- C. For foster and pre-finalized adoptive home settings, the agency may complete a risk assessment pursuant to rule 5101:2-34-33 of the Administrative Code.
- D. As noted, the agency shall conduct a third-party investigation when the following parties are involved as principals:
1. Any institution, facility, foster or pre-finalized adoptive home which is licensed, or certified by ODJFS and operated or supervised by Clinton County Job and Family Services;
  2. Any employee, or agency of ODJFS or of the agency; or
  3. Any authorized person who is representing ODJFS or the agency and who is providing services for payment or as a volunteer.

- E. No later than seventy-two hours from completion of the investigation, the agency shall enter the following information into the family and children services information system (SACWIS):
  - 1. Type of initial contact with law enforcement (either verbal or written;) and
  - 2. Type of third party.
- F. The agency shall maintain copies of its investigation (and law enforcement's third party investigation) in the case record.
- G. When an investigative activity cannot be completed, justification and written approval of the executive director or designee shall be filed in the case record no later than the time frame specified in paragraph (B) of this rule for making a case disposition. The agency may not waive the case disposition or the time frame for making the case disposition.
- H. No later than three working days after the completion of the case disposition pursuant to paragraph (T) of rule 5101:2-34-32 of the Administrative Code, the agency shall provide written notification of the case disposition to the administrator, director, or other chief administrator and the owner or governing board of the out-of-home care entity and the appropriate licensing and supervising authorities to share information in accordance with rule 5101:2-34-38 of the Administrative Code. The agency shall not provide witness statement or police or other investigative report.
- I. The agency, likewise, will provide written notification of the case disposition to parties in the family foster home or other out-of-home care setting, i.e. foster caregivers. The agency shall also address in writing what, if any, actions will be taken relative to 5101:2-5-28 which outlines causes for denial of initial certification, recertification or revocation of a family foster home certificate. It will also include information regarding the individuals' right to pursue a grievance or board review of such a decision.

Please note the information described above will be shared with foster parents at their time of initial certification, on-goingly at training and rule reviews.

Submitted by:

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Kathi Spirk, LSW  
Adoption/Foster Care Supervisor

Approved by:

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John Hosler  
Director

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