

**PALM BEACH COUNTY**  
**CHILD ABUSE PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS PROTOCOL**  
(revisions January 2007)

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**PALM BEACH COUNTY**  
**CHILD ABUSE PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS PROTOCOL**  
(revision December 2006)

**INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Palm Beach County Child Abuse Protective Investigations Protocol is to coordinate services to the families of Palm Beach County through cooperation, collaboration, and the sharing of appropriate information by agencies within this jurisdiction. This Palm Beach County Child Abuse Protective Investigations Protocol was revised with updates in December 2006.

To the extent set forth in this written protocol that was established by the Community Alliance of Palm Beach County in the *Child Abuse Protective Investigation Protocol Final Report, revised July 2002*, all parties assume partial or full responsibility for conducting certain components of protective investigations. Specifically, the Child Abuse Protective Investigations Protocol establishes operational procedures for the joint investigation of child abuse reports in Palm Beach County, Florida in order to:

1. Provide standard, consistent and thorough investigations
2. Maximize the resources through a joint investigative process
3. Minimize the number of interviews for children who are victims of abuse or neglect
4. Allow for the orderly collection of evidence in the criminal investigative process
5. Ensure the provision of appropriate services when deemed necessary for children and their families
6. Provide a forum for on-going communication and resolution of issues involving family safety in this community and foster an effective collaboration among
  - Law enforcement
  - Office of the State Attorney
  - Judiciary
  - Domestic Violence providers
  - Child Protection Team
  - Local school system
  - Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
  - Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Key elements of the Palm Beach County Child Abuse Protective Investigations Protocol include the following:

1. A countywide policy (General Order) – Memorandum of Understanding between the Law Enforcement Planning Council, the Sheriff's Office, the State Attorney's Office, the Department of Children and Families, Community Alliance, and others.
2. Interagency agreements between DCF & law enforcement, which are updated annually.
3. An Administrative Order covering interviews of young victims in child and sexual abuse cases.
4. Mandatory protocol training of law enforcement and DCF personnel.
5. Countywide agreement that all law enforcement agencies must:
  - a. Classify and respond to Child Abuse calls as 'Priority Calls'
  - b. Adopt and implement the Palm Beach County Child Abuse Investigations Protocol
  - c. Actively investigate the criminal aspects of a child abuse report
  - d. Designate a child abuse specialist within their agency
  - e. Agree to cross jurisdictions to investigate/interview, when appropriate
  - f. Request mutual-aid, when needed

6. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office developed and maintains an integrated database for law enforcement. The *Child Safety Review Database* captures child abuse investigation reports and information.
7. The regular protocol meetings for law enforcement and DCF protocol specialists, the protocol management team and the protocol oversight team.
8. A designated staff, contributed by the Office of the State Attorney, to coordinate and facilitate the operations of the protocol teams and overall protocol communications.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

On January 14, 2002, the Community Alliance of Palm Beach County established a collaborative community workgroup to research and develop a better delivery system for child abuse protective investigations in Palm Beach County. The Community Alliance stipulated that any new delivery system developed by the workgroup must involve best practices and a single management structure to ensure accountability.

The Community Alliance formed a Protective Investigations System Design Workgroup and directed the workgroup to develop a:

1. Program model/design that includes clear and specific roles and responsibilities for all parties.
2. Wiring diagram, which outlines specific detail of the system.
3. Management system that has specific and clear accountability, responsibility, and integrates data for oversight.
4. Model where the police chiefs, the sheriff, and designated players work together within the same system.
5. Integrated database for protective investigations accessible to both law enforcement and DCF child Protective Investigators.
6. Specific training design and training structure for all parties.
7. Budget and funding resources to support system.
8. Plan for independent evaluation process and outcomes.

The Protective Investigations System Design Workgroup was comprised of individuals with decision-making authority from the Law Enforcement Planning Council, the Sheriff's Office, the Department of Children and Families, the State Attorney's Office, the Child Protection Team, the Children's Services Council, and Child & Family Connections. Community Alliance members chaired and facilitated the workgroup process. The workgroup met approximately twelve times (2-3 hours sessions) from January 24, 2002 to June 7, 2002.

Direct-line staff members (i.e., patrol officers, detectives, dispatch, protective investigators) were brought into the design process on April 8, 2002 to review and critique the system design and collaborative response procedures. Input received during the critique session was incorporated into the system design.

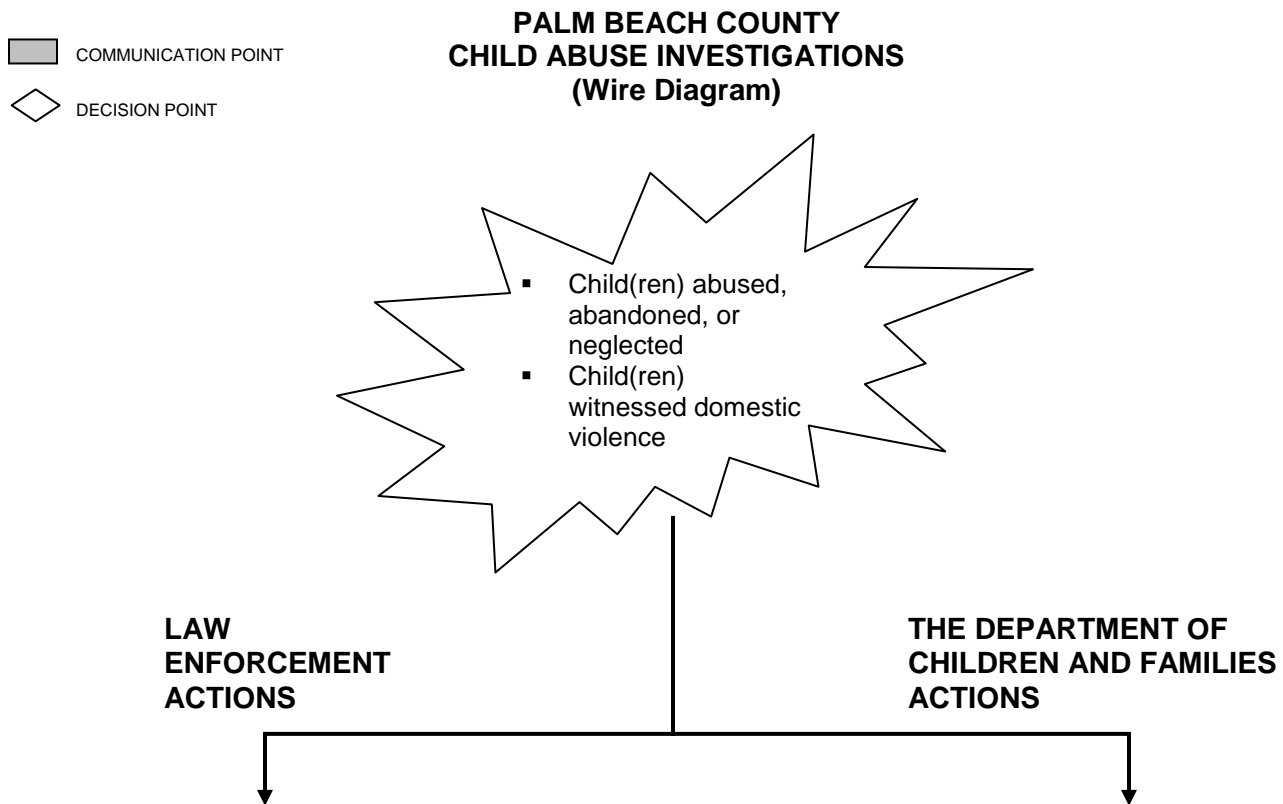
The outcome products produced by the Protective Investigations System Design Workgroup include:

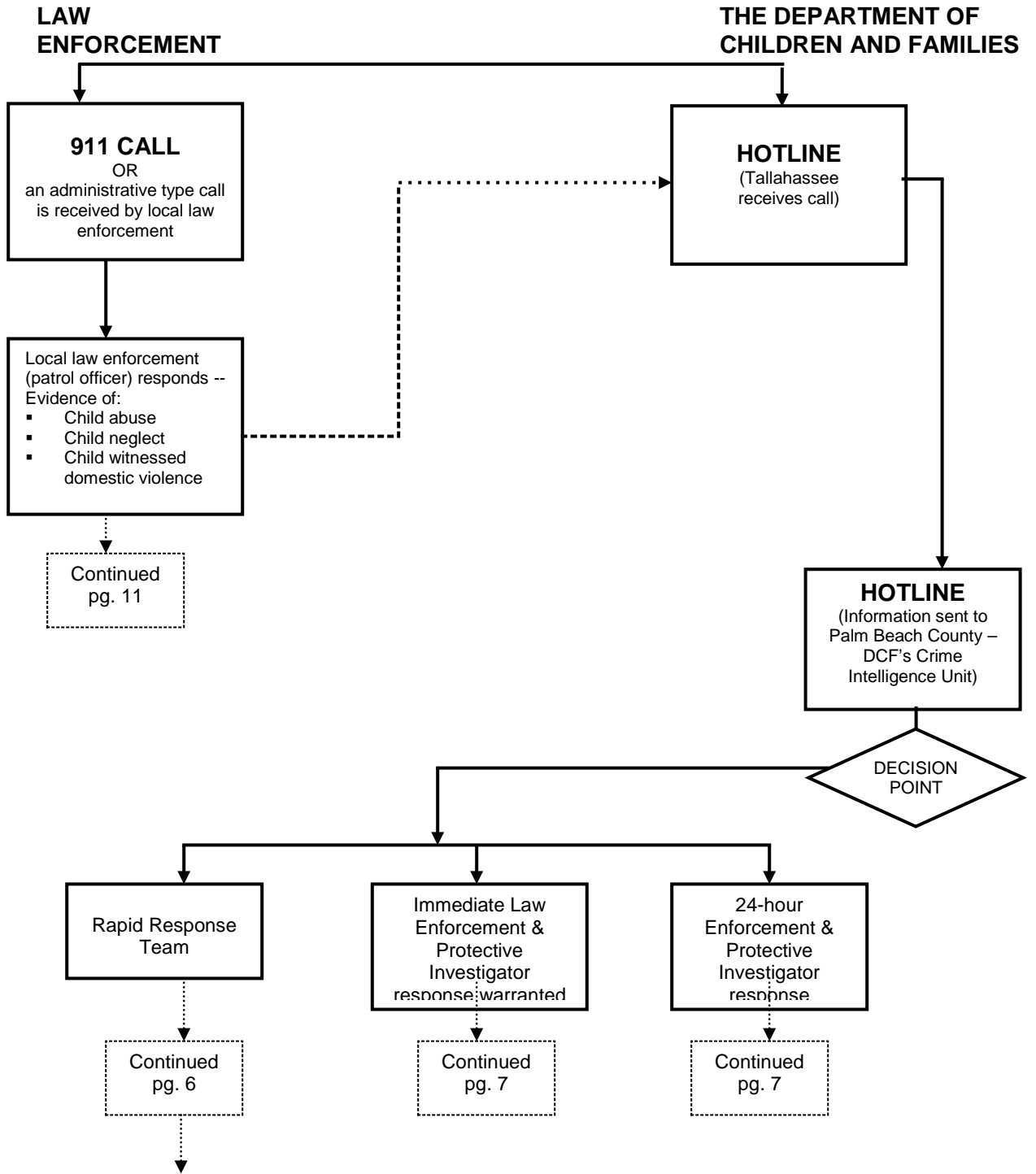
1. A detailed wire diagram outlining a collaborative protocol for child abuse investigations in Palm Beach County;
2. Detailed response procedures for both law enforcement officers and DCF Protective Investigators;
3. Training timelines and competencies needed by cadets/trainees, first responders, and child abuse specialists;
4. An integrated countywide database for child abuse investigations (i.e., Child Safety Review Database);
5. A three-tier management and oversight structure for the new child abuse investigation system;
6. Accountability measures needed and required for a quality collaborative countywide child abuse investigative system;
7. Key elements needed for system implementation;
8. Acknowledgements of workgroup members.

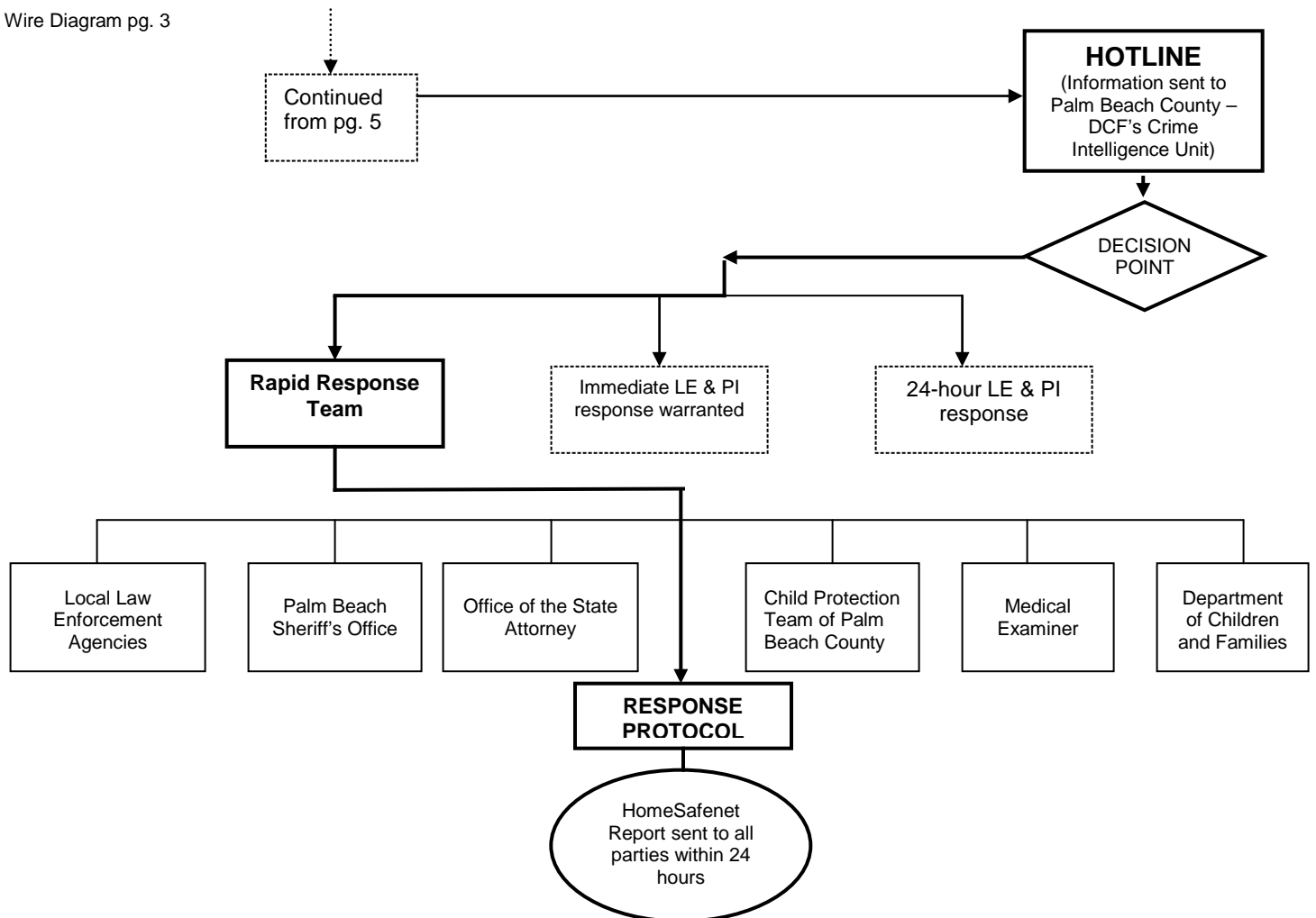
The outcome protocol document was submitted to the Community Alliance of Palm Beach County on June 17, 2002 (revised July 2002) and served as the final report from the Protective Investigations System Design Workgroup and protocol implementation manual.

### PROTOCOL SYSTEM DIAGRAM

The following wire diagram outlines the response protocol for a child abuse investigation requiring or involving: (a) the rapid response team, (b) an immediate response by a law enforcement officer and a Protective Investigator, (c) a 24-Hour response by a law enforcement officer and a protective investigator, and (d) a 911 or administrative call to law enforcement.







Interagency Agreement - 1999

Each party has key responsibilities during the investigation and intervention of suspected cases of child maltreatment, and shares a common interest in the protection of children. Each of the party enters into this agreement with the following common goals:

- > To prevent further trauma to children in child maltreatment cases caused by multiple contacts or interviews with professionals conducted at multiple locations.
- > To provide the child and family with needed services and assist them in regaining maximum functioning in a timely manner.

Therefore, in an effort to enhance protection and service to children in Palm Beach County the parties agree to the following practices during the investigation and intervention of child maltreatment cases:

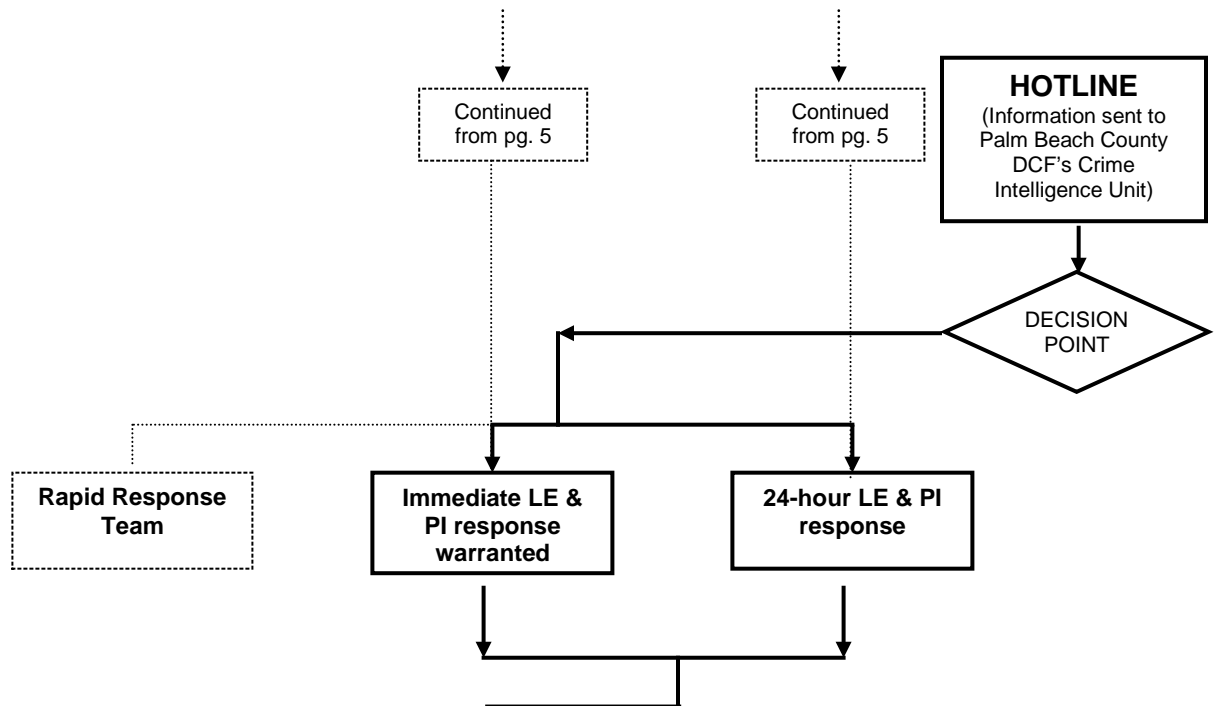
1. All suspected child victims of sexual and physical abuse **shall** be interviewed at The Simon C. Fireman Foundation Home Safe Center for Children, or the child interview room in Belle Glade. Child Protection Team Case Coordinators can provide a psychosocial assessment of the family, and forensic interview of the child upon request, or the investigator/detective can use the facilities to conduct their own interview of the child.
2. All suspected victims of child maltreatment who need a medical examination and there are no immediate emerging medical needs, shall be scheduled for a Child Protection Medical Evaluation as soon as possible. Child Protection Team Medical Personnel are available during clinic or after hours to conduct examinations or consultations upon request. Suspected victims of child abuse to be medically examined by the Child Protection Team, in emergency-after hours cases, will be seen at St. Mary's Medical Center.
3. Multi-disciplinary case reviews can be scheduled with the Child Protection Team to determine the best course of action and make recommendations, or to come up with mutual recommendations with all agencies involved.
4. Departments can refer parents and children involved in domestic violence cases to the Children's Place at Home Safe Safety Net Program to provide crisis intervention, outreach therapy to the victim and children, and referrals for other services.
5. The investigation and intervention of child maltreatment and domestic violence cases should be handled in a comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary team approach to assure each case involves the combined professional abilities, knowledge, skills, and available resources of all the involved, key parties.

Procedures - 6/1/99

The Rapid Response Team shall assist as requested by any law enforcement agency in Palm Beach County with any of the following types of cases:

- > Unexpected infant death or drowning
- > Life threatening child abuse or neglect
- > Life threatening injuries
- > Sexual battery of child under 12 involving serious bodily injuries
- > Multiple victim/multiple suspect cases of child abuse

1. Law Enforcement, Department of Children & Families, Medical Examiner, medical personnel, hospitals, EMT, and ambulance services call central notification telephone number 561-688-3400 -ask for RRT -and request assistance at time of case initiation.
2. This telephone call shall result in the dispatch of all or parts of the Team, depending upon the request and needs of the law enforcement agency with case jurisdiction.
3. The law enforcement agency with case jurisdiction is in charge of the case and investigation.
4. Case review shall be convened, when requested, following the beginning of the investigation to coordinate information and follow-up. This shall be initiated by law enforcement and should include all responding Team members.
5. At case closure, when requested, there may be a meeting to critique the overall Rapid Response Team process. The law enforcement agency with case jurisdiction or a Team representative may initiate this meeting.
6. The RRT Committee will meet at least quarterly to review cases, problem areas, and discuss outcomes and training needs.



**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- Child abuse call shall be designated “a priority call” in each law enforcement agency
- Law enforcement shall take lead during an investigation to determine/establish probable cause
- Each law enforcement agency shall designate a specific person or protocol for response 24/7
- Once fax of HomeSafenet Report is received, Dispatch shall wait for call from DCF before commencing investigation
- If no contact from DCF by 24-hours, law enforcement shall notify DCF on-call administrator
- Law enforcement shall respond when called by DCF – ONLY EXCEPTION: When DCF determines a 2<sup>nd</sup> response is not warranted

**RESPONSIBILITY**

- Gather data (venue of a crime)
    - Mother
    - Father or Paramour
    - Address
  - The law enforcement officer shall share all background information available (i.e., priors, PALMs, FCIC paperwork) with DCF, as permitted by law
- Immediate Response:
- Shall call dispatch for family/resident history while on the scene if necessary

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**DCF's Crime Intelligence Unit:**

- Shall review all reports
- Shall determine where crime occurred – DCF has the responsibility to determine which law enforcement agency is called to respond
- Shall transmit the HomeSafenet Report to all parties (i.e., PBSO, municipality law enforcement with jurisdiction, CPT, PI Unit)
- Fax will include written instructions /notification that a PI will call to coordinate commencement time for investigation
- Shall be available to the protective investigator and law enforcement for ‘trouble-shooting’ 24/7

**RESPONSIBILITY**

DCF shall share all background information available (i.e. HomeSafenet Report, priors, PALMs, FCIC paperwork) with the law enforcement officer

Immediate Response:

- Shall coordinate with DCF dispatch specialist to obtain prior history of abuse /neglect, PALMs, and FCIC
- Shall provide written information to patrol officer regarding prior history of abuse /neglect, PALMs, and FCIC within 24 hours.

24-hour Response:

- Shall provide written information to patrol officer regarding prior history of abuse /neglect, PALMs, and FCIC
- PI shall obtain all background information regarding child, family, residence within 24 hours

HomeSafe net Report sent to all parties at the same time

Provide background Information to each

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

Continued from pg. 7

**RESPONSE PROTOCOL**  
Immediate and 24-hour response

Function:  
Criminal Investigation  
Role:  
Criminal aspects of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence

Function:  
Child Abuse Investigation  
Role:  
Child safety aspects of child abuse/neglect

Coordinate response by phone

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
▪ Shall respond when called by DCF/PI  
▪ Shall wait for call from the PI before commencing investigation

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
▪ DCF shall take lead to coordinate response time with law enforcement for both Immediate & 24-hour response  
▪ PI shall call Law Enforcement **BEFORE** he/she is on route to set meeting time and place  
▪ Shall determine if a third party location is warranted  
▪ Shall determine which cases require the PI to pick up child and transport to the alternative location for the interview  
▪ Shall communicate and coordinate a response to a third party location with the law enforcement specialist  
▪ DCF shall inform Law Enforcement's Dispatch that response is needed for a crime – 'allegation of child abuse'  
▪ A CPT decision is made

The patrol officer and the Protective Investigator shall determine a location to meet and have a mutual discussion – prior to arriving at the scene

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement with the PI as to specific responsibilities at the scene  
▪ Shall call dispatch for family/resident history if necessary

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement with the patrol officer as to specific responsibilities at the scene  
▪ Shall use mobile digital terminals or call DCF's dispatch to obtain additional information if necessary

Investigation at location of abuse/neglect  
---  
Jurisdiction where the abuse occurred

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
▪ Shall respond  
▪ Only if resources are not available – request mutual aid  
▪ Shall investigate criminal aspects of child abuse  
▪ Shall follow prescribed protocol  
▪ Shall make an arrest decision  
▪ Shall make an arrest and write a report or write a report indicating why criminal charges were not warranted  
▪ Shall confer with DCF on the scene  
▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement as to when both parties leave the scene  
▪ Shall be responsible for continuity of case, as needed throughout Palm Beach County  
▪ Shall enter report information into database  
▪ If non-response by DCF notify DCF on-call administrator and record non-response

**RESPONSIBILITY**  
▪ Shall assess child safety issues  
▪ Shall complete child risk assessment  
▪ Shall follow prescribed protocol  
▪ Shall confer with law enforcement on the scene  
▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement as to when both parties leave the scene  
▪ Shall make a removal decision  
▪ Shall document in HomeSafenet  
▪ If non-response by patrol officer call law enforcement specialist and record non-response



**Continued:  
RESPONSE  
PROTOCOL**  
(Immediate and 24-hour)

**LAW  
ENFORCEMENT**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**



- RESPONSIBILITY**
- The patrol officer will call the Child Abuse Specialist from his/her agency
  - The law enforcement specialist will call DCF's specialist
  - Law enforcement and DCF may not always agree on the decision; but, will respect each other's role

- RESPONSIBILITY**
- The protective investigator will call the DCF specialist
  - The DCF specialist will call the municipality's designated specialist
  - DCF may call local dispatch and ask for a line supervisor to respond, as needed
  - DCF and law enforcement may not always agree on the decision; but, will respect each other's role

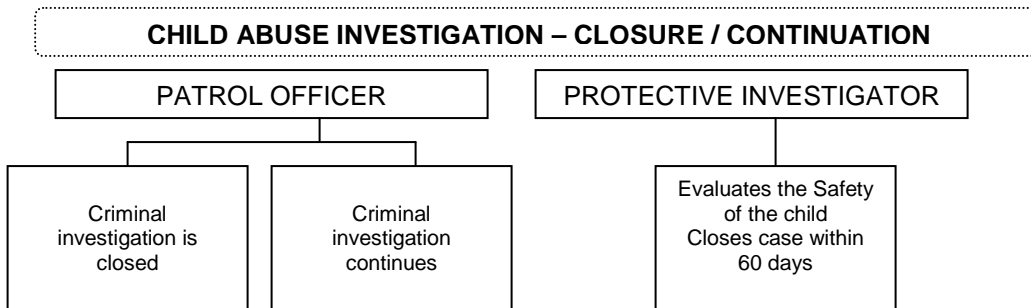
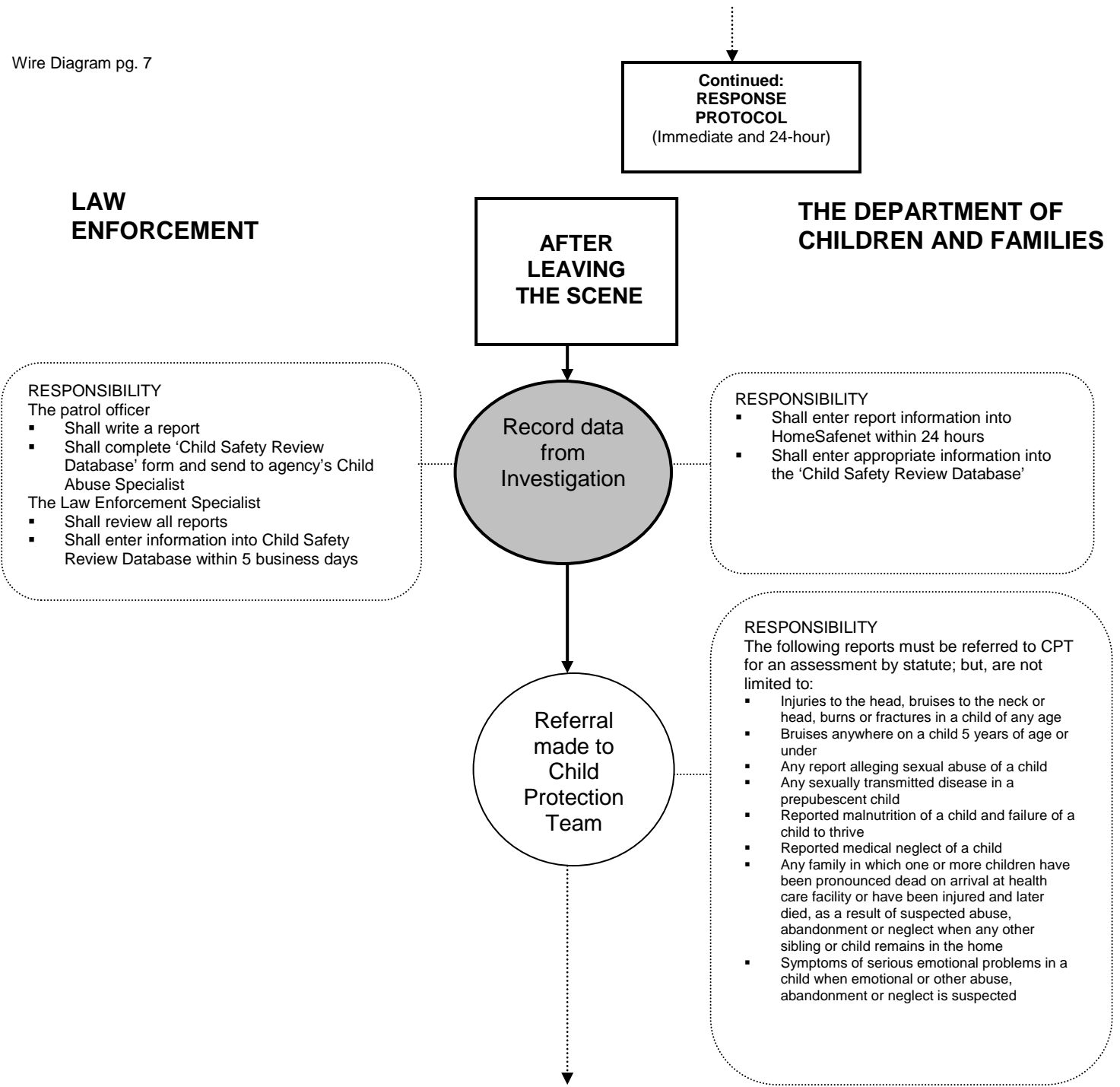


- RESPONSIBILITY**
- For purposes of safety, mutual agreement shall be made as to when both parties leave the scene
  - Shall make an arrest and write a report or write a report indicating why criminal charges were not warranted
  - Shall present criminal cases to the State Attorney's Office

- RESPONSIBILITY**
- For purposes of safety, mutual agreement shall be made as to when both parties leave the scene
  - Shall remove child, if warranted
  - Shall determine need for services
  - Shall make immediate referral for services, if warranted

**LEAVE THE  
SCENE**

Continued  
pg. 10



**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Continued from pg. 5

**911 CALL**  
OR  
an administrative type call is received by local law enforcement

Local law enforcement (patrol officer) responds -- Evidence of:

- Child abuse
- Child neglect
- Child witnessed domestic violence

Florida Statute 39.201 requires mandatory reports by a law enforcement officer who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected

- Shall obtain history on address
- Shall obtain history on individuals in home
- Shall classify/code call as a child abuse case

- Inform DCF's dispatch specialist of child(ren)
- Request data about history on abuse/child/address/adult in home
- Shall provide information to DCF

- Jointly make decision regarding risk with DCF dispatch specialist
- If a disagreement occurs, contact the Child Abuse Specialist/Supervisor

Patrol officer shall call the **HOTLINE**

Patrol officer shall use available resources to obtain information

Patrol Officer shall call DCF's local emergency hotline if children are in need of sheltering

DECISION POINT

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

- Shall check on prior history of abuse/neglect in HomeSafenet and PALMs
- Shall provide information to patrol officer

- Shall jointly make decision regarding risk with patrol officer
- If a disagreement occurs, contact the on-call administrator

- Unexpected infant death or drowning
- Life threatening child abuse or neglect
- Life threatening injuries
- Sexual battery of child under 12 involving serious bodily injuries
- Multiple victim/multiple suspect cases of child abuse

Call Rapid Response Team

See pg. 6

Immediate response needed at location by DCF.

The DCF dispatch Specialist contacts Protective Investigator for immediate response with road patrol officer

See pg. 7

Child(ren)'s safety is secure 24-hour response acceptable

DCF will take responsibility to coordinate the 24-hour response

The patrol officer will write a report indicating why criminal charges were not warranted and will complete a Child Safety Review Database form

See pg. 7

# LAW ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOL

## INVESTIGATING CHILD ABUSE IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

*Adapted From:*

The 1998 Governor's Family Safety Task Force  
Florida Law Enforcement Child Abuse Response Protocol

### Initial Response

- A. When the child abuse call comes in through dispatch or 911:
1. Communications (dispatch) will not alter the reported child abuse classification.
  2. The responding officer should collect dispatch information.
  3. Dispatch should secure the 911 tape for 90 days.
  4. Once the officer arrives on the scene and assesses the complaint, he/she shall make a determination whether an investigation is warranted. If an investigation is warranted, the officer shall contact the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96ABUSE, pursuant to s. 39.201(1), F.S.
- B. When the call comes from the Florida Abuse Hotline or a Child Protective Investigator, an officer shall be dispatched to conduct a criminal investigation. Dispatch shall not classify call as Assist Other Agency.
1. Upon notification of a report of abuse from the Hotline, DCF shall immediately confirm the venue of the crime and then forward allegations of criminal conduct to the appropriate law enforcement agency in which the alleged conduct has occurred. s. 39.301(2)(a).
  2. Law enforcement agency shall await telephonic contact from DCF prior to dispatching law enforcement officer.
  3. DCF and law enforcement shall coordinate their response. Law enforcement dispatch shall classify the call as a "priority call."
  4. If DCF investigative interview is outside the jurisdiction and law enforcement cannot respond, the Police Department will seek assistance from other agencies utilizing Mutual Aid Agreement.
- D. Obtain recent and historical protective investigative reports from the Department of Children and Families.  
The name of any person reporting child abuse, abandonment, or neglect may not be released to any person other than employees of the department responsible for child protective services, the central abuse hotline, law enforcement, the child protection team, or the appropriate state attorney, without the written consent of the person reporting. s. 39.202(5).
- E. Upon arriving at the scene the officer and the Protective Investigator (PI) shall immediately assist each other to assess and secure the alleged crime scene.
- When the alleged abuse and neglect has resulted in a child's death, the initial responder shall report such death and circumstances forthwith to the district medical examiner. s. 406.12.
  - First responder shall call out the Rapid Response Team.
  - Identify the victims, suspects and witnesses, including other children and third parties.
  - Secure control of any weapons present.
  - Determine extent of injuries.
  - Provide medical first responder treatment and request emergency medical assistance if needed
  - Conduct preliminary interview of victim and witnesses. Children should not be interviewed in the presence of the parent or guardian unless and until the perpetrator has been determined.
  - Evaluate welfare and safety of the victim.

- F. Survey the crime scene for physical evidence of abuse and neglect. Photograph all relevant evidence.
- G. Observe and note injuries to household members who may be victims of some degree of domestic violence or other criminal offenses and take appropriate and necessary action. Photograph all relevant evidence.
- H. Separate people on scene from evidence.
- I. Determine if other assistance is needed, i.e., a translator, victim advocate, crime scene investigator, other specialized officer or detective, or other services.
- J. Document any utterances or statements made by the child victim or other children at the scene in relation to the case.  
Document any utterances or statements made by the parent or other guardian/responsible adult at the scene in relation to the case.
- K. Conduct a criminal history check on address, and potential suspect and wants and warrants check on suspects and witnesses.
- L. Law enforcement on the scene shall have primary responsibility in collecting and preserving evidence.
- M. Both the law enforcement officer and the Protective Investigator (PI) shall prepare a written report.  
The initial report is crucial to the post-investigation process, any potential prosecution, the protective investigation by the Department of Children and Families, and any related cases arising from the incident being investigated. In accord with the individual law enforcement agency's directives and procedures the initial responder shall prepare a written report of his actions and findings. That information shall then be made available for the follow-up investigation. Upon completion of the investigation a written supplemental report shall be prepared. The written report should:
  - Identify the child abuse and/or neglect crime.
  - State, date, time and place crime occurred.
  - Determine existence of any 911 call, or any call on other recorded police lines, and identify date, time, and when available, name of caller.
  - State information provided by the dispatcher.
  - Document any custody issues disclosed during interviews.
  - Document probable cause
  - Document all verbal and written statements
  - Document the names, dates of birth, social security numbers, addresses, phone numbers and statements of all victims, suspects and any relevant household members.
  - Reference prior incident reports.
  - List names and addresses of victim's contact persons.
  - Identify the suspect.
  - Show the relationship between the victim and suspect.
  - Describe victim and suspect appearance including their demeanor at time of arrival at scene.
  - Document all injuries, physical conditions and medical treatment rendered. Observable or reported injuries shall be preserved by photography and documented in the written report. Photographs must be taken with a measurable guide, whenever possible, and persons photographed must be identified in the photos. The officer should always consider the privacy of the victim, witnesses when photographing injuries.
  - Document name of medical treatment provider and other health care providers such as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel.
  - Document evidence collected, from where, when and by whom including chain of custody.
  - Identify other children present and living in the home and what action was taken to provide for their safety.

- Describe indicators of future threats to safety of family members.
  - Reference any special needs such as language barriers or disabilities of parties involved.
  - Document criminal history information.
  - Complete a narrative of the officer's observations and description of the alleged incident.
  - Identify all witnesses, by name, date of birth, address, and contact phone numbers; if interviewed, set out substance of statement and whether written, recorded or oral.
- N. Law enforcement and the Department shall agree on the future course of the investigation. In the event of a disagreement, law enforcement and the Department shall initiate a consultation with their respective specialist.
- O. The final determination shall be entered into the central database.

### **Follow-up Investigation**

Steps A through C are conducted when the initial responder does not continue with the in-depth investigation. Agencies requiring that the responding officer also conduct the in-depth investigation may skip steps A through C and begin at D.

- A. Determine through contact with first responder and his/her supervisor, or by reviewing the initial report what emergency action has been taken, what is being initiated, and the allegations that have been reported.
- B. Determine what notifications have been made and need to be made.
- C. Obtain names with all identifying information of suspects remaining at the scene from the first responding officer, when applicable. Ensure that the initial responding officer has documented all persons who have left the scene prior to your arrival.
- D. Collect and preserve additional evidence.
- E. In consultation with the Protective Investigator (PI) recommend or coordinate the medical examination of victims and siblings or other children in the home with the Department of Health Child Protection Team (C.P.T) or other medical facility designated in the local Memorandum of Agreement.
- F. In consultation with the Protective Investigator (PI) recommend to the Department of Children and Families or Department of Health Child Protection Team that psychological evaluations be conducted when the victim exhibits evidence of severe emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect.
- G. When the alleged abuse and neglect has led to a child's death, obtain the results of the medical examination of all children residing with the victim.
- H. Interview victim, witnesses and suspect.  
 Prior to conducting interviews the law enforcement investigator shall, with the assistance of a Department of Children and Families Protective Investigator, determine interview strategies. Whenever possible child interviews should be conducted at a C.P.T. interview facility utilizing a C.P.T. case coordinator in consultation with the law enforcement investigator.  
 The chief judge shall provide by order reasonable limits on the number of interviews that a victim of child abuse under the age of 16 years must submit to for law enforcement or discovery purposes. s. 914.16. See copy of Admin. Order attached.
1. Interview the victim.
    - Any token gifts given to the child, i.e., dolls, small badges, stickers, should be done after the interview and without promising the child anything in exchange for testimony.
    - Audiotaping or videotaping of the victim statement should be conducted in accordance with local law enforcement procedure or administrative order. If the interviewer chooses to only use an audiotape, the interviewer must document the non-verbal responses of the victim and non-verbal behavior of

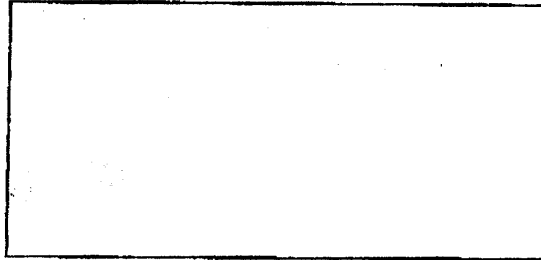
the other witnesses present. Although presence of persons other than the interviewer is discouraged, when videotaping the victim, any persons in the interview room should be in view of the video camera.

- When the initial interview with the child is conducted at school, the law enforcement agency may allow a school staff member who is known by the child to be present during the initial interview if:
    - (a) law enforcement agency believes that the school staff member could enhance the success of the interview by his or her presence; and
    - (b) the child requests or consents to the presence of the school staff member at the interview. School staff may be present only when authorized by law. s. 39.301(18).
  - Interview victim in a location that is comfortable, non-distracting and provides privacy and a sense of safety for the child. When possible, the officer should interview the child away from the scene where the incident occurred.
  - Children are often portrayed as unreliable witnesses, susceptible to suggestive and leading questions. The interviewer must be trained and experienced in conducting child interviews. It is strongly suggested that a C.P.T. interview facility be utilized, as well as a C.P.T. case coordinator to conduct the interview. The child should also be questioned as to whether prior incidents of abuse have occurred.
  - The interviewer must qualify the child as a witness in an age appropriate manner.
  - Document the child's words exactly in identifying body parts and distinguish between contact-union versus non-contact/non-union when gathering information on sexual acts.
  - When a child draws or makes notes for the interview, document on the drawings or notes the date, time and the names of persons present during the interview. The drawings or notes should be retained as items of evidence.
  - Review the child-victim's statement line by line and seek to corroborate each and every element of information provided in order to enhance the child's credibility.
2. Interview non-offending witnesses.
- Caution should be taken to ensure that the non-offending parent or care-giver is not provided information that can be passed on to the suspect.
3. Interview suspects.
- Law enforcement takes the lead and controls when, where and how the suspect is to be interviewed.
4. Interview other witnesses.
- When recent or historical victims have been identified as part of the case, they should be interviewed as witnesses. Prosecutors may use the Williams Rule of Evidence to submit the statements of historical victims in court (similar fact evidence).
- I. Using agency procedures, conduct a controlled phone call.
- J. Document all statements.
- K. Prepare any search warrants that would be required to secure further evidence not yet collected. When the investigator is able to obtain documented consent to search the scene from individuals with the right to authorize a consensual search, a warrant is not required. Use extreme caution when proceeding without a search warrant.
- L. Final determination
- Upon gathering the necessary information, evaluate and compare the suspect's prior criminal history, relationship to the child, statements of the suspect, victim and witnesses, and the collected evidence to determine probable cause for which offenses, if any, have been committed. Officers or detectives may consult with the Division Chief of the State Attorney's Office

Crimes Against Children Unit for guidance.

- If the decision is made not to make an arrest, law enforcement shall document their findings and reasons in a final report.
- The final determination shall be entered into the central database.

**Administrative Order NO. 4.009-4/02\***



IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 4.009-4/02\*

IN RE: ORDER COVERING INTERVIEWS  
OF YOUNG VICTIMS IN CHILD  
AND SEXUAL ABUSE CASES

WHEREAS, section 914.16, Florida Statutes (2000), authorizes the chief judge to establish limits on the number of interviews that a minor victim must submit to for law enforcement or discovery purposes;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is ORDERED as follows:

This order shall apply to the investigation and prosecution of all cases of abuse under Sections 794.011, 800.04, or 827.03 when the victim is under sixteen years of age or a victim of a violation of Sections 794.011, 800.02, 800.03, or 825.102 who is a person with mental retardation as defined in Section 393.063(42), at the time the interviews are sought.

For purposes of this order the term "interview" is defined as any procedure in which the child victim is required to provide a factual recitation of the circumstances surrounding the allegation of abuse. The term "interview" does not include the following:

1. Information obtained for the purpose of medical or psychological diagnosis or treatment.
2. An initial contact with the victim by law enforcement and/or Florida Department of Children and Families to assess validity of complaint or



need to take protective measures on behalf of the victim.

3. Contacts with DCF legal, victim services, (sexual assault/domestic violence) counselors, guardians ad litem, or assistant state attorneys seeking to carry out responsibilities as designated by statute.
4. Actual court testimony of victim.

In accord with the foregoing and the need to act in the best interest of the child victims of abuse, it is ordered that no child victim of abuse shall be subject to more than four interviews in the course of the investigation and prosecution of an incident of abuse except upon order of the court. These interviews shall be as follows:

1. The first interview shall be conducted within a reasonable time for the validation of the complaint. The interview when feasible shall be held at the Home Safe Facility in Lake Worth, Florida. This interview will be attended by law enforcement, and/or DCF and may include a representative from victim services (sexual assault/domestic violence), the state attorney's office, or the child protection team. All attending agencies shall meet prior to the interview and make every effort to coordinate efforts and produce all necessary information in the course of that interview. To minimize the traumatic effects to the child, all interviews shall be conducted by no more than two persons. This interview shall be audio or video taped whenever possible to ensure that other parties have the opportunity to hear the child's statement.
2. The second interview may be held by the state attorney's office and/or law enforcement, and may include DCF, victim services (sexual assault/domestic violence), or the child protection team. This interview which may occur prior to the filing of formal charges, shall be for the purpose of clarifying and expanding any facts necessary for filing.
3. The third interview will be conducted under the rules governing depositions. The deposition shall be conducted in a setting and manner intended to

minimize the traumatic effects of the interview on the victim. Defense counsel shall notice all parties including the guardian ad litem consistent with Crim. Proc. Rule 3.220(h).

4. The fourth interview may be a full and complete pretrial interview conducted by the state attorney's office.
5. Additional interviews shall be allowed only by order of the court upon motion for good cause shown. Additional interviews shall be limited in scope to assure minimal impact on the victim.

ORDERED and SIGNED in Chambers at West Palm Beach, Florida,  
this 30 day of April, 2002.



Edward H. Fine  
Chief Judge

\*supersedes Admin. Order 4.009-9/92

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
DISTRICT SPECIFIC PROTOCOL  
INVESTIGATING CHILD ABUSE IN PALM BEACH COUNTY**

**Investigative Response**

The Department of Children and Families will be responsible for assessing the immediate safety of the child and taking the necessary actions that will ensure the continued safety of the child. The Department will also be responsible for determining and implementing necessary services to support the family.

All allegations of suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment are reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE by either the citizens or by law enforcement through dispatch of 911 calls.

Based on the allegation stated in the report and the potential risk to the victim or the family members, Central Florida Abuse Hotline counselors assign response priority to the reports and forward them to the county where the alleged victim is located. In Palm Beach County all reports are received by the Crime Intelligence Unit and sent to the appropriate Protective Investigations Unit.

- All reports requiring an immediate on-site protective assessment shall be immediately forwarded by the Hotline to the appropriate protective investigative staff in the county where the victim is located.
- Reports not requiring an immediate on-site protective assessment will be forwarded by the Hotline to the appropriate district staff in time to allow for a protective assessment to be commenced within 24 hour.
- When the alleged abuse and neglect has resulted in a child's death, the initial responder shall report such death and circumstances forthwith to the district medical examiner, FS. 406.12. First responder shall call out the Rapid Response Team.
- Although reports must be assigned to the county where the victim is located, the county where the abuse occurs or the county where the child resides, if different, must assist the lead county when requested. However, if a criminal proceeding is commenced in the county of residence, the residential county must take the lead with the county of location assisting.
- Hotline staff shall accept calls on child-on-child sexual abuse that do not meet the criteria for an investigation. This information is entered into the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System solely for statistical purposes and no district response is required. The caller is then electronically transferred to the appropriate county sheriff's office. The written report is sent from the Hotline to the sheriff's office within 24 hours.
- All reports for District 9, Palm Beach County, are received at a central location. The receiving staff is responsible to forward the report electronically to law enforcement, Child Protection Team, and the appropriate DCF Investigations unit.

Law enforcement and DCF Protective Investigator shall provide each other with background information relating to the subjects of the reports, as permitted by law.

Upon receiving a report from the Florida Hotline, the designated law enforcement officer and the Department of Children and Families Protective Investigator will jointly conduct an investigation.

The investigation is commenced when the child Protective Investigator or other designated responder attempts to make the initial on-site, face-to-face contact with the victim.

Upon arriving at the scene the law enforcement officer and the Protective Investigator, shall immediately assist each other to assess and secure the alleged crime scene.

- Identify the victims, suspects, and witnesses, including other children and third parties.
- Secure control of any weapons present.
- Determine extent of injuries.
- Provide medical first responder treatment and request emergency medical assistance if needed.
- Conduct preliminary interview of victim and witnesses.
- Children should not be interviewed in the presence of the parent or guardian unless and until the perpetrator has been determined.
- Evaluate welfare and safety of the victim.

### **Protective Investigations Required Notifications**

Upon commencement of an investigation, but not necessarily before the face-to-face contact with the child, the parent, guardian or other person responsible for the child's welfare, including an adult household member identified as having allegedly mistreated a child, shall be informed of the following:

1. That a report has been received by the central abuse hotline alleging child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
2. The name of the person responding, the name of that individual's supervisor and information on how to contact each person.
3. The purpose of the investigation.
4. The right to review the department's records 30 days after the commencement of the investigation and anytime thereafter prior to the destruction of the record.
5. The right to have an attorney present during any interviews: however; the department may proceed with other inquiries to determine the safety of the child and the veracity of the report.
6. General information about outcomes and services related to the department's response/investigation that would assist the family to better understand what they may expect.
7. The commitment of the department to the safety of the child and the involvement of the family to the fullest extent possible in decisions regarding service planning and provision.
8. The right of the parent or legal custodian to be involved to the fullest extent possible in determining the nature of the allegation and the nature of any identified problem.

The notification required above will be accomplished by delivery of brochure CF/PI 175-32. The individual receiving the notice must be given the opportunity to ask questions to ensure understanding. The case file must reflect that the notification occurred. This will be accomplished by a notation in the chronology showing the name of the person to whom the brochure was given and the date it was given.

When an investigator suspects that a false report has been made, the investigator must advise the reporter of the potential administrative fines, civil and/or criminal penalties, which may result if a false report has occurred.

Licensing staff shall be advised of a report involving a licensed home or facility. If the facility is unlicensed, the owner/operator shall be advised of the report. If the report is on a child who is active on the caseload of a child welfare staff person, that staff person shall also be advised of the report. Notice to staff must occur no later than the next working day after report receipt.

Staff must advise the Children and Families contract manager and the manager/ operator of the contract agency of the alleged abuse, neglect, or abandonment reports involving any child who is receiving services from the contract agency.

Staff must advise the appropriate human rights advocacy committee of every report of institutional child abuse or neglect within 48 hours of commencement of the investigation/assessment. This may be accomplished by forwarding the initial report from the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System or via a district developed document.

### **Child Protective Investigator**

- Shall commence the case within the required time frames
- When the family cannot be located at the time of the initial visit, attempts to locate them on a daily basis, at different times, must be continued. If it is not feasible or prudent to make daily attempts that fact must be documented and explained in the case file noting supervisory concurrence. The date, time, and location of all attempted visits must be documented in the case file.
- Shall make face to face contact with the victim/child, other children, caretaker responsible and all other adult household members
- Shall observe and document the conditions, appearance, and development of each child named in the report and all other children who reside in the same household
- When age appropriate, each child named in the report and all other children who reside in the household must be interviewed
- Protective Investigator must be sensitive to the social, economic, and cultural environment of the family including their response to the department's presence in their lives
- If the person responsible for the child will not allow observation of the child, for whatever reason, the Protective Investigator shall immediately contact their supervisor for guidance and document in the case file as to both the caretaker's refusal and the supervisor's directions
- Shall make all necessary notifications
- Shall assess child safety issues. Staff must use the allegation matrix and begin documentation of the strengths and risks during initial assessment (within 24 hours) through the use of district specific strengths and risks assessment instrument. The assessment instrument assists in documenting the strengths and needs of the family as they relate to family functioning and safety of all children in the home
- Shall follow prescribed protocol
- Shall confer with Law enforcement on the scene
- Shall reach a mutual agreement as to when both parties leave the scene
- If warranted, shall make a removal decision
- Shall document in HomeSafenet

### **Disagreement or clarification is warranted between law enforcement and Protective Investigators.**

#### Law Enforcement

- The patrol officer will call the specialist from their agency
- The specialist will call DCF's specialist to make a coordinated decision

#### Child Protective Investigator:

- The Protective Investigator will call DCF specialist
- The DCF specialist will call the municipality's designated specialist
- DCF may also call local dispatch and ask for a line supervisor to respond, if needed

### **Completing the Initial Investigation.**

Child Protective Investigator:

- Shall remove a child if warranted. The person taking a child into the department's custody must request information from the child's parent or custodian regarding parents, proposed parents, and "next of kin" (defined as adult relative of a child who is the child's brother, sister, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or first cousin).
- Shall determine need for services
- Shall make immediate referral for services, if warranted
- Shall close case if no services are needed and there is no indication of child abuse/neglect

### **Recording data from investigation**

DCF/Child Protective Investigator:

Child Protective Investigator shall update report information on HSN within 24 hours of the first contact. Under no circumstances shall anyone delete any maltreatment from the report. All reported maltreatments require appropriate documentation prior to closure of the case. If applicable, Protective Investigator shall enter report information into HomeSafenet.

### **Follow-up on Investigation**

Protective Investigator shall complete Child Safety Assessment within the specified time period (48 hours) and ensure all relevant safety factors are documented.

Protective Investigator shall make all required collateral contacts and document the contacts in the investigative file. To be relevant, this person(s) needs to have had contact with the child, alleged perpetrator or the family. The person(s) contacted must have had direct knowledge or information regarding the family situation.

Once investigation is completed, Protective Investigator shall document HSN as to the final report of his/her investigation and submit the file for the final review of the supervisor and closure.

1. When there is obvious, compelling evidence that there is no finding of abuse or neglect for any alleged or suspected maltreatment of the alleged victim(s),
2. And, there are no prior reports with some indications or verified findings of abuse or neglect on any subjects of the report or other individuals living in the home, and
3. The report does not contain allegations pertaining to the sexual abuse of a child then:

The Protective Investigator will only be required to complete:

- a. The Initial Child Safety Assessment within the specified time period (48 hours) and ensure that all relevant safety factors are documented.
- b. A face-to-face interview with the child, other children, siblings, and all adults living in the home.
- c. All criminal history background checks on all adult household members.

Provided conditions (1), (2) and (3) are met and there are no additional concerns found in (b) and (c), the Protective Investigator may close the investigation without completing additional follow-up casework activities. This would include not having to complete collateral contacts or updating the Initial Child Safety Assessment. The rationale for this decision must be clearly documented in the Initial Child Safety Assessment (ICSA), which must be retained in the case file.

### **Referral to Child Protection Team**

The reports that include one or more of the following allegations must be referred to Child Protection Team:

- Injuries to the head, bruises to the neck or head, burns or fractures in a child of any age

- Bruises anywhere on a child 5 years of age or under
- Any report alleging sexual abuse of a child
- Any sexually transmitted diseases in a prepubescent child
- Reported malnutrition of a child and failure to thrive
- Reported medical neglect of a child
- Any family in which one or more children have been pronounced dead on arrival at health care facility or have been injured and later died, as a result of suspected abuse, abandonment, or neglect when any other sibling or child remains at home
- Symptoms of serious emotional problems in a child when emotional or other abuse, abandonment or neglect is suspected

Child Protection Team Assessment - Certain reports of child abuse and neglect will indicate a need for child protection team assessment. All reports shall be screened pursuant to section 39.303, FS, and, when indicated [see, especially s.39.303 (2), FS], a referral made to the team as soon as possible in the investigative response phase.

Team assessment activities include medical evaluation, consultation, specialized interviewing, family psychosocial assessment, psychological evaluation when indicated, and arranging and conducting multi-agency and full team staffings. See also CFOP 175-20, "Child Protection Teams and Sexual Abuse Treatment Programs." Some cases will require an immediate referral to assure the safety of the child and/or to preserve forensic evidence. In all cases, early consideration and when indicated, early referral, is necessary in order to allow for timely response by the team.

Although a child may already have been medically examined by a non-child protection team physician, referral to the team is still made for an independent medical evaluation or for a team medical consultation with the physician who initially examined the child.

Staff must provide the team the report number and the date of the report. When the initial referral to the team is from another source, team staff will verify that an abuse report was made by contacting the protective investigations unit. If a report has not been received, team staff are required as mandated reporters to report to the Abuse Hotline.

**INTEGRATED DATABASE - Child Safety Review Database**

An integrated countywide database for child abuse investigations (i.e., Child Safety Review Database) has been developed using the Sheriff's Office's SIS computer database system. The purpose of the database will be to share information between all law enforcement agencies throughout Palm Beach County. Law enforcement agencies and DCF will be able to view the incidence of child abuse countywide. Further development of the Child Safety Review Database will need to be completed by the Child Safety Review Commission, the Interagency Implementation and Management Team, and the Specialist/Training Team. It is anticipated that the data system will be expanded, in the future, to incorporate incidences of domestic violence and other issues that place children at risk. Listed below are the data-fields for the Child Safety Review Database.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Case number (HomeSafenet Report Number) | 10. Address  |
| 2. Hotline Abuse Report date               | 11. Nature of case (Drop box)                      |
| 3. Hotline Abuse Report time received      | 12. Date of incident                               |
| 4. Victim name                             | 13. PD Case Number                                 |
| 5. Parents/Paramour names                  | 14. Officer's Name/Identification<br>Number/Agency |
| 6. DOB                                     | 15. Was the hot line notified?                     |
| 7. Race                                    | 16. Comment section                                |
| 8. Gender                                  | 17. DCF/Protective Investigator's name             |
| 9. Social Security Number                  |  |

## MANAGEMENT/ OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE

The following section describes the three-tier management and oversight structure (i.e., Child Safety Review Commission, the Interagency Implementation/Management Team and the Specialist and Training Team). Membership, purpose, frequency of meetings, the quality assurance focus, and staffing resources needed for each management structure are listed below.

### Child Safety Review Commission

Membership	Purpose Frequency of Meeting	QA Focus	Staff / Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Law Enforcement Planning Council</li> <li>◆ Sheriff</li> <li>◆ DCF District Adm.</li> <li>◆ State Attorney</li> <li>◆ Child and Family Connections, Executive Director</li> <li>◆ Community Alliance Executive Committee Member</li> <li>◆ Criminal Justice Institute</li> </ul>	<p>System Accountability and Oversight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Responsibility &amp; authority of system accountability &amp; compliance</li> <li>◆ Spot check compliance</li> <li>◆ Coordinate system refinement and improvement</li> </ul> <p>Quarterly Meetings – or scheduled as needed to address issues of noncompliance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Insure compliance of all agencies' response to child abuse calls/hotline calls</li> <li>◆ Spot check all agencies' implementation procedures and response protocol</li> <li>◆ Ensure attendance at oversight meetings by all agencies</li> <li>◆ Ensure documentation and reports are submitted by all agencies</li> <li>◆ Ensure compliance of each agency with data-entry into Child Abuse Database</li> <li>◆ Track training of personnel by all agencies</li> </ul>	<p>One full time staff Part time clerical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Funded by participating agencies and Community Alliance of Palm Beach County</li> <li>◆ Reports directly to commission</li> <li>◆ Coordinates, tracks, and analyzes data related to the child abuse database</li> <li>◆ Coordinates and facilitates the meetings and reports needed for the implementation, management and compliance of the collaborative protective investigation system</li> <li>◆ Track-database usage</li> </ul>

### Interagency Implementation and Management Team

Membership	Purpose Frequency of Meeting	QA Focus	Staff / Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ DCF administration and specialists</li> <li>◆ Law enforcement specialists</li> <li>◆ Dispatch personnel</li> <li>◆ Child Protection Team</li> <li>◆ State Attorney's Office</li> <li>◆ DOVE</li> <li>◆ Child &amp; Family Connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ensure a quality and coordinated response to child abuse in Palm Beach County</li> <li>◆ Identify non-response, problems and success</li> <li>◆ Quarterly meetings between agency management team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Coordinated response between 1<sup>st</sup> responders</li> <li>◆ Documentation and communication</li> <li>◆ CPT referrals</li> <li>◆ Dove referrals</li> <li>◆ DAF referrals</li> <li>◆ Track database usage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Existing management personnel in each agency</li> </ul>



**Specialist and Training Team**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Purpose Frequency of Meeting</b>	<b>QA Focus</b>	<b>Staff / Resource</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Law enforcement agency specialist (every municipality will have a specialist)</li> <li>◆ DCF specialists and Protective Investigator supervisors</li> <li>◆ State Attorney's Office</li> <li>◆ CPT</li> <li>◆ Dispatch personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ System refinement &amp; improvement process meetings</li> <li>◆ Quarterly Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Monitor agencies' response to ensure compliance</li> <li>◆ Review all child abuse reports</li> <li>◆ Ensure child abuse reports are responded to by 1<sup>st</sup> responders</li> <li>◆ Coordinate data / ensure data is entered into child abuse database</li> <li>◆ Lead person to coordinate and schedule training within agency</li> <li>◆ On call / contact person for child abuse issues, rapid response, interagency disagreements between 1<sup>st</sup> responders, and/or when clarification is needed</li> <li>◆ Attend system refinement &amp; improvement meetings</li> <li>◆ Complete documentation for Oversight Commission – One page (standardized) review sheet or 'exception' reports</li> <li>◆ Trainer for agency during 'roll out'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Existing personnel in each agency who have specialized (or are willing to become specialized) in child abuse</li> <li>◆ Florida Statutes (Chapter 39)</li> <li>◆ Criminal Statutes/MOU</li> <li>◆ Rapid Response / Child Death Investigations</li> <li>◆ Physical Abuse &amp; Child Neglect</li> <li>◆ Medical Aspects of Child Abuse</li> <li>◆ Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children</li> <li>◆ Family Dynamics</li> <li>◆ Allegations in Divorce</li> <li>◆ The Role of Department of Children &amp; Families</li> <li>◆ Sexual Predators and Offenders</li> <li>◆ Types of Offenders</li> <li>◆ Child Safety Online</li> <li>◆ Patterns of Disclosure</li> <li>◆ Evidence Collection in Child Abuse Cases</li> <li>◆ Interviewing the Non-Offending Parent</li> <li>◆ Internet Resources for Investigators</li> <li>◆ Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator</li> <li>◆ Interviewing the Child Victim</li> <li>◆ Court Preparation and Demeanor</li> </ul>

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The following section outlines items that relate to accountability, which may be incorporated into independent evaluations of the protocol, such as quality assurance reviews. The two tables below denote various accountability issues by each protocol task. The corresponding tasks required for a law enforcement agency and the Department of Children and Families are noted for reference. Table A focuses on Immediate & 24 Hour Responses and Table B addresses 911 and Administrative Calls. General system accountability issues are also listed at the end of this section.

**TABLE A. Immediate & 24-hour Response**

PROTOCOL TASK	ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS	LAW ENFORCEMENT TASKS	DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TASKS
Florida Hotline Report (Home Safe) sent to all parties at the same time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The number of HomeSafenet reports (hotline reports) received by DCF during a given timeframe</li> <li>◆ Are the HomeSafenet reports being sent to the appropriate jurisdiction by DCF</li> <li>◆ Are the HomeSafenet reports sent timely to law enforcement by DCF</li> <li>◆ The number of child abuse calls received by law enforcement Agencies</li> <li>◆ Are the law enforcement agencies waiting for DCF before commencing investigation</li> <li>◆ The number of times law enforcement called DCF regarding no response w/in 24 hours</li> <li>◆ Does law enforcement reclassify child abuse calls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>A child abuse call shall be designated "a priority call" in each law enforcement agency</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Law enforcement shall take lead during an investigation to determine/establish probable cause</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Each law enforcement agency shall designate a specific person or protocol for response 24/7</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Once fax of Hotline Report is received, Dispatch shall <u>wait</u> for call from DCF before commencing investigation</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If no contact from DCF by 24-hours, law enforcement shall notify DCF on-call administrator</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Law enforcement shall respond when called by DCF – <u>ONLY EXCEPTION</u>: When DCF determines a 2<sup>nd</sup> response is <u>not</u> warranted</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>DCF's Crime Intelligence Unit:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shall review all reports</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shall determine where crime occurred – DCF has the responsibility to determine which law enforcement agency is called to respond</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shall transmit the HomeSafenet Report to all parties (i.e., PBSO, municipality law enforcement with jurisdiction, CPT, Protective Investigations Unit)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Fax will include written instructions/notification that a Protective Investigator will call to coordinate commencement time for investigation</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shall be available to the Protective Investigator and law enforcement for 'trouble-shooting' 24/7</i></li> </ul>
Provide background Information to each party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Does the Protective Investigator send background information and data to all parties within 24 hours</li> <li>◆ Does law enforcement share report information with Protective Investigator</li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Gather data (venue of a crime)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Mother</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Father or Paramour</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Address</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <i>The law enforcement officer shall share all background information available (i.e. priors, PALMS, FCIC paperwork) with DCF, as permitted by law</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Immediate Response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shall call dispatch for family/resident history while on the scene if necessary</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>DCF shall share all background information available (i.e. HomeSafenet Reports, priors, PALMS, FCIC paperwork) with the law enforcement officer</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Immediate Response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shall coordinate with DCF dispatch specialist to obtain prior history of abuse /neglect, PALMs, and FCIC</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shall provide written information to patrol officer regarding prior history of abuse /neglect, PALMs, and FCIC within 24 hours.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>24-hour Response:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shall provide written information to patrol officer regarding prior history of abuse /neglect, PALMs, and FCIC</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Protective Investigator shall obtain all background information regarding child, family, residence within 24 hours</i></li> </ul>
Response Protocol (Immediate & 24-hour response)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Are the interagency agreements updated yearly (documents developed, timeframes to be completed, face-to-face meetings to occur for signing)</li> <li>◆ Are calls classified correctly</li> </ul>	<p><i>Function:</i> <i>Criminal Investigation</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i> <i>Criminal aspects of child abuse/neglect and domestic violence</i></p>	<p><i>Function:</i> <i>Child Abuse Investigation</i></p> <p><i>Role:</i> <i>Child safety aspects of child abuse/neglect</i></p>

TABLE A. Immediate & 24-hour Response, continued

PROTOCOL TASK	ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS	LAW ENFORCEMENT TASKS	DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TASKS
Coordinate response by phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Does DCF call within 24 hours to set-up meeting</li> <li>◆ Does the investigation occur timely / within 24 hours</li> <li>◆ Number of calls DCF made to law enforcement to respond</li> <li>◆ How long does it take for law enforcement to respond</li> <li>◆ Number of times law enforcement did not respond to call from DCF (by jurisdiction)</li> <li>◆ Are specialists (law enforcement &amp; DCF) providing documentation and follow-up information</li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall respond when called by DCF/Protective Investigator</li> <li>▪ Shall wait for call from the Protective Investigator before commencing investigation</li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DCF shall take lead to coordinate response time with law enforcement for both Immediate &amp; 24-hour response</li> <li>▪ Protective Investigator shall call law enforcement <u>BEFORE</u> he/she are on route to set meeting time and place</li> <li>▪ Shall determine if a third party location is warranted</li> <li>▪ Shall determine which cases require the Protective Investigator to pick up child and transport to the alternative location for the interview</li> </ul>
The patrol officer and the Protective Investigator shall determine a location to meet and have a mutual discussion – prior to arriving at the scene		<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement with the Protective Investigator as to specific responsibilities at the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall call dispatch for family/resident history if necessary</li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement with the patrol officer as to specific responsibilities at the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall use mobile digital terminals or call DCF's dispatch to obtain additional information if necessary</li> </ul>
Investigation at location of abuse/neglect (Jurisdiction – <u>where</u> the abuse occurred)		<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall respond</li> <li>▪ <u>Only</u> if resources are not available – request mutual aid</li> <li>▪ Shall investigate criminal aspects of child abuse</li> <li>▪ Shall follow prescribed protocol</li> <li>▪ Shall make an arrest decision</li> <li>▪ Shall make an arrest and write a report <u>or</u> write a report indicating why criminal charges were not warranted</li> <li>▪ Shall confer with DCF on the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement as to when both parties leave the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall be responsible for continuity of case, as needed throughout Palm Beach County</li> <li>▪ Shall complete Child Safety Review Database form</li> <li>▪ If non-response by DCF notify DCF on-call administrator and record non-response</li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall assess child safety issues</li> <li>▪ Shall complete child risk assessment</li> <li>▪ Shall follow prescribed protocol</li> <li>▪ Shall confer with law enforcement on the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall reach a mutual agreement as to when both parties leave the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall make a removal decision</li> <li>▪ Shall document in FPSS and HomeSafenet</li> <li>▪ If non-response by patrol officer call law enforcement specialist and record non-response</li> </ul>
If a disagreement occurs or clarification is warranted between law enforcement and Protective Investigators		<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The patrol officer will call the specialist from his/her agency</li> <li>▪ The law enforcement specialist will call DCF's specialist</li> <li>▪ Law enforcement and DCF may not always agree on the decision - but, will respect each other's role</li> </ul>	<p><i>RESPONSIBILITY</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Protective Investigator will call the DCF specialist</li> <li>▪ The DCF specialist will call the municipality's designated specialist</li> <li>▪ DCF may call local dispatch and ask for a line supervisor to respond, as needed</li> <li>▪ DCF and law enforcement may not always agree on the decision - but, will respect each other's role</li> </ul>

TABLE A. Immediate & 24-hour Response, continued

PROTOCOL TASK	ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS	LAW ENFORCEMENT TASKS	DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TASKS
Decision Point Completing the initial investigation	Type of follow-up by law enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Criminal arrest</li> <li>▪ Prosecution</li> </ul> Number of children removed	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For purposes of safety, a mutual agreement shall be made as to when both parties leave the scene</li> <li>▪ Shall make an arrest and write a report <u>or</u> write a report indicating why criminal charges were not warranted</li> <li>▪ Shall present case to the State Attorney's Office</li> </ul>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall remove child, if warranted</li> <li>▪ Shall determine need for services</li> <li>▪ Shall make immediate referral for services, if warranted</li> <li>▪ Shall close case if no services are needed and there is no indication of abuse/neglect</li> </ul>
Record data from Investigation	Specialist Records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number of calls</li> <li>◆ Time of call</li> <li>◆ Time of response by Protective Investigator</li> <li>◆ Time of response by law enforcement</li> <li>◆ Number of no response</li> </ul>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> The patrol officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall write a report</li> <li>▪ Shall complete a Child Safety Review Database form and send to agency's Child Abuse Specialist</li> </ul> The law enforcement specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall review all reports</li> <li>▪ Shall enter information into Child Safety Review Database within 5 business days'</li> </ul>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall enter report information into FPSS within 24 hours</li> <li>▪ Shall enter report information into HomeSafenet</li> <li>▪ Shall enter appropriate information into the 'Child Safety Review Database'</li> </ul>
Referral made to Child Protection Team (CPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Number of HomeSafenet reports are sent to CPT by DCF</li> <li>◆ Number of mandated cases sent to CPT</li> <li>◆ Number of cases not referred to CPT</li> <li>◆ Number of medical appointments missed</li> <li>◆ 'reason' cases were not referred to CPT</li> <li>◆ Timeliness of CPT's reports to Protective Investigator/DCF</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall send HomeSafenet report to CPT on daily basis</li> <li>▪ Shall send list of all daily reports to CPT</li> <li>▪ CPT shall fax list of cases mandated but not referred to CPT (every two days)</li> <li>▪ Shall call CPT for after hours emergencies</li> <li>▪ DCF &amp; CPT shall compare #'s of 1239's received &amp; referrals made (monthly at POA meeting)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ CPT to provide reports to Protective Investigator</li> <li>➢ Interview reports w/in 20 days</li> <li>➢ Staffing reports w/in 10 days</li> <li>➢ Psychosocial reports w/in 20 days</li> <li>➢ Psychological reports w/in 20 days</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**TABLE B. 911 and Administrative Calls**

PROTOCOL TASK	ACCOUNTABILITY ITEMS	LAW ENFORCEMENT TASKS	DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TASKS
911 CALL OR an administrative type call is received by local law enforcement			
Patrol Officer shall call the HOTLINE	Does the patrol officer or Dispatch call the hotline	Florida Statute 39.201 requires mandatory reports by a law enforcement officer who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected	
Patrol Officer shall use available resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Are calls received by the dispatch or patrol officer classified correctly – child abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shall obtain history on address</li> <li>▪ Shall obtain history on all individuals in home</li> <li>▪ Shall classify/code call as a child abuse case</li> </ul>	

TABLE B. 911 and Administrative Calls, continued

System Task	Accountability	Law Enforcement	Department of Children and Families
Patrol Officer shall call DCF's local emergency hotline if children are in need of sheltering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Does law enforcement contact DCF's dispatch specialist</li> <li>◆ Does the patrol officer have information on prior history and is the information provided to the DCF dispatch specialist</li> <li>◆ Does DCF provide prior history information to the patrol officer on the scene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Inform DCF's dispatch specialist of child(ren)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Request data about history on abuse/child/address/adult in home</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shall provide information to DCF</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shall check on prior history of abuse/neglect in FPSS, HomeSafenet, and PALMs</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Shall provide information to patrol officer</i></li> </ul>
DECISION POINT		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Jointly make decision regarding risk with DCF dispatch specialist</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If disagreement occurs, contact on-call Child Abuse Specialist/Supervisor</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shall jointly make decision regarding risk with patrol officer</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If disagreement occurs, contact DCF on-call administrator</i></li> </ul>
Decision -1 Call Rapid Response		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Call Rapid Response 561-688-3400</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Call Rapid Response 561-688-3400</i></li> </ul>
Decision - 2 Immediate response needed at location by DCF			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The DCF dispatch specialist contacts Protective Investigator for immediate response with road patrol officer</i></li> </ul>
Decision - 3 Child (ren)'s safety is secure 24-hour response acceptable		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Patrol officer will write a report indicating why criminal charges were not warranted and will complete a Child Safety Review Database form.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The DCF takes responsibility to coordinate 24-hour response</i></li> </ul>

**Overall Accountability Issues**

Quality Assurance Items:

- ◆ Attendance at meetings
- ◆ Submitting reports
- ◆ Data entry into Database
- ◆ Quality of service

Management Team:

- ◆ Management meetings are held and attended by (law enforcement, Department of Children and Families, law enforcement dispatch personnel, and the Child Protection Team)

Specialist Training & Meetings:

- ◆ Number of law enforcement (by jurisdiction) receiving training, advanced training, (attendance record)
- ◆ System refinement & improvement process meetings

Training:

- ◆ Number of law enforcement (by jurisdiction) receiving training, retraining, (attendance record)
- ◆ Percentage of law enforcement - first responders completing training
- ◆ Number of Protective Investigators receiving training, retraining, (attendance record)
- ◆ Percentage of Protective Investigators – first responders completing training

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### December 2006 Update Protocol Team

Lanna Belohlavek, Div. Chief Crimes Against Children – State Attorney’s Office  
James Burke, Asst. Chief – Boca Raton Police Department  
Stephen Faroni – Operations Manager, D-9 Department of Children and Families  
Glenn Goss, Chief – Highland Beach Police Department  
Carol Gregg, Capt. – Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office  
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Jane Scott, Sgt. – Boca Raton Police Department  
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Ted Simpkins – Former D-9 Administrator Department of Children and Families  
James Stormes, Major – Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office

### 2002 Protocol Development and Originating Protocol Document

#### **Protective Investigations System Design Workgroup**

Major Bill Brown; Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office  
Lieutenant Jim Stormes; Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office  
Chief Clay Walker; Town of Manalapan/Law Enforcement Planning Council  
Lori Day; Department of Children and Families  
Lisa Magrino; Department of Children and Families  
Alison Hitchcock; Child Protection Team  
Howard Olshansky; Children’s Place at Home Safe  
Barry Krischer; State Attorney/Community Alliance member  
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#### Other individuals who contributed to the workgroup process:

Dave May; Department of Children and Families  
Lanna Belohlavek; State Attorney’s Office  
Grace Diez-Arguelles; State Attorney’s Office (DOVE-Domestic Violence Unit)  
Dr. Colaizzo; Child Protection Team

#### **Direct-Line Staff - Review, Critique, & Input Meeting (April 8, 2002)**

Kelly Simpson; Palm Beach Gardens PD	James Sapyta; School District PD
Karl Leonard; Boca Raton PD	Mark Grish; PBSO
Sandra Owens; Lake Worth PD	Rola Arbid; DCF Protective Investigations
Gary Noel; West Palm Beach PD	Sergio Rosario; DCF Protective Investigations
Amy Facchine; Jupiter PD	Sally White; DCF Protective Investigations
Larry Payne; Riviera Beach PD	Don Samis; DCF Protective Investigations
Eric Coleman; PBSO	Joan Dwyer; DCF Protective Investigations
Paul Valerio; Boynton PD	
John Young; Delray Beach PD	

2002 Protocol Development and Originating Protocol Document; continued

**System Design Training (Sub-Workgroup)**

Barry Krischer; State Attorney (Chair)

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Chief Clay Walker; Town of Manalapan/Law Enforcement Planning Council

Lisa Magrino; Department of Children and Families

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Law Enforcement Protocol – Barry Krischer

DCF District Specific Protocol – DCF Staff

Database Research – Jim Stormes

System Design Facilitator – Tana Ebbale

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Final Report – Dorothy K. Carmichael-Schwab