



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 5180:2-36-04 PCSA requirements for conducting a specialized assessment/investigation.

Effective: December 16, 2024

(A) The public children services agency (PCSA) is to conduct a specialized assessment/investigation if the child abuse and/or neglect report involves an alleged perpetrator who meets one or more of the following criteria:

(1) Is a person responsible for the alleged child victim's care in an out-of-home care setting as defined in rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code.

(2) Is a person responsible for the alleged child victim's care in out-of-home care as defined in section 2151.011 of the Revised Code.

(3) Has access to the alleged child victim by virtue of their employment by or affiliation to an organization as defined in section 2151.011 of the Revised Code.

(4) Has access to the alleged child victim through placement in an out of home care setting.

(B) A specialized assessment/investigation is to have a third party if a principal named in the report poses a conflict of interest for the PCSA pursuant to rule 5101:2-36-08 of the Administrative Code.

(C) The PCSA is to cross-refer the abuse and/or neglect report to law enforcement pursuant to rule 5101:2-36-12 of the Administrative Code.

(D) No later than seven calendar days after the screening decision, the PCSA is to provide written notification to all referents who are mandated reporters in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

(E) If a specialized assessment/investigation of an abuse and/or neglect report involves multiple alleged child victims from multiple cases, the PCSA is to complete a separate assessment/investigation for each case. The "Specialized Assessment and Investigation" is to be



completed for each case.

(F) The PCSA is to initiate the screened in child abuse and/or neglect report in accordance with the following:

(1) For an emergency report, attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim within one hour from the time the referral was screened in, to assess child safety and interview the alleged child victim.

(2) For all other reports, complete one of the following within twenty-four hours from the time the referral was screened in, to assess child safety:

(a) Attempt a face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim.

(b) Complete telephone contact with a parent, guardian, custodian, or collateral source who has knowledge of the alleged child victim's current condition, and can provide current information about the child's safety.

(G) If the alleged child victim is an infant or nonverbal child, who is currently in a hospital setting and is not scheduled for discharge within seventy-two hours from the time the referral is screened in, contact as described in paragraph (H) of this rule can be made virtually or by phone prior to discharge with the direct medical staff who is providing care for the infant or child and is able to provide information regarding the alleged child victim's current condition and can provide current information about the alleged child victim's safety.

(H) The PCSA is to, at minimum, complete face-to-face contacts and interview each alleged child victim and at least one parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker to assess child safety. Attempts to conduct these face-to-face interviews are to be completed as follows, until the needed face-to-face contacts and interviews are completed:

(1) The PCSA is to attempt face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim and a parent, guardian, custodian, or other caretaker within the first four working days from the date the referral was screened-in.



(2) If the PCSA's attempt to complete face-to-face contact pursuant to paragraph (H)(1) of this rule was unsuccessful, the PCSA is to attempt at least one additional face-to-face contact within the first four working days from the date the referral was screened-in.

(3) If the attempted face-to-face contacts described in paragraphs (H)(1) and (H)(2) of this rule are unsuccessful, the PCSA is to, at minimum, continue making face-to-face attempts at least every five working days until any of the following occur:

(a) Contacts are made,

(b) The parent, guardian, or custodian refuses contact and the PCSA files a complaint in juvenile court, or

(c) The PCSA needs to make a report disposition pursuant to paragraph (X)(1) of this rule.

(I) If a child abuse and/or neglect report involves an alleged child victim, or another child who resides with the alleged child victim, who is not in the custody of a PCSA or PCPA, the PCSA will not interview the child without the child's parent, guardian, or custodian's consent unless one of the following exigent circumstances exists:

(1) There is credible information indicating the child is in immediate danger of serious harm or can provide information regarding immediate danger of serious harm.

(2) There is credible information indicating that the child will be in immediate danger of serious harm upon return home from school or other locations away from home.

(3) There is credible information indicating that the child may be intimidated from discussing the alleged abuse or neglect in their home.

(4) The child requests to be interviewed at school or another location due to one of the circumstances listed in this paragraph.



(J) The specific facts necessitating that assessment/investigative interviews of a child be conducted without the child's parent, guardian, or custodian's consent are to be documented in Ohio's comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS).

(K) If a child who is not in the custody of a PCSA or PCPA is interviewed without a parent, guardian, or custodian's consent, then the same day, the PCSA is to attempt a face-to-face or complete a telephone contact with the child's parent, guardian, or custodian to inform them that an interview of their child occurred and provide the specific facts that necessitated the child be interviewed without a parent, guardian, or custodian's consent.

(1) If the attempt to contact the child's parent, guardian, or custodian pursuant to this paragraph is unsuccessful, the PCSA is to continue to attempt to contact the child's parent, guardian or custodian once every five working days until contact is made with the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, or until the PCSA makes a report disposition pursuant to paragraph (X)(1) of this rule.

(2) The PCSA is to document in Ohio's CCWIS the date and time of the contact, or attempted contacts.

(L) No later than the next working day from the date the referral was screened in, the PCSA is to notify the out-of-home care setting licensing and supervising authorities pursuant to section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

(M) The PCSA is to advise the parent, guardian, or custodian of the information contained in the report at the time of the initial contact. The initial contact between the PCSA and the parent, guardian, or custodian includes face-to-face or telephone contact whichever occurs first, if information is gathered as part of the assessment process.

(N) The PCSA is to conduct and document all face-to-face interviews with the alleged perpetrator, unless law enforcement or the county prosecutor will interview the alleged perpetrator pursuant to the procedures delineated in the county child abuse and neglect memorandum of understanding, in order to assess their knowledge of the allegation.

(O) The PCSA is to advise the alleged perpetrator of the allegations made against them at the time



of the initial contact with the person. The initial contact between the PCSA and the alleged perpetrator of the report includes the first face-to-face or telephone contact, whichever occurs first, if information is gathered as part of the assessment/investigation process.

(P) The PCSA is to conduct and document face-to-face or telephone interviews with any person identified as a possible source of information during the assessment/investigation to obtain relevant information regarding the safety of and risk to the child. The PCSA is to exercise discretion in the selection of collateral sources to protect the privacy of the principals of the report.

(Q) The PCSA is to take any other actions necessary to assess safety and risk to the child. These actions may include, but are not limited to:

(1) Taking photographs of areas of physical injury on the child's body.

(2) Taking photographs of the child's environment with the consent of the out-of-home setting administrator.

(3) Attempting to secure a medical examination or psychological evaluation, or both, of the child with the consent of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or with a court order.

(4) Attempting to secure any relevant records, including but not limited to school, mental health, and medical records, and incident reports in an out-of-home care setting.

(R) The PCSA need not interview a child if it is documented in Ohio's CCWIS that the child does not have sufficient verbal skills, or additional interviewing would be detrimental to the child.

(S) At any time the PCSA determines a child is in immediate danger of serious harm, the PCSA is to follow procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-37-02 or 5101:2-39-03 of the Administrative Code.

(T) If the PCSA determines supportive services are necessary, the supportive services are to be made available to the child and/or the child's parent, guardian, or custodian pursuant to procedures established in rule 5101:2-40-02 of the Administrative Code.



(U) The PCSA is to request assistance from the county prosecutor, the PCSA's legal counsel, or the court if refused access to the alleged child victim or any records necessary to conduct the specialized assessment/investigation.

(V) The PCSA is to have an interpreter present for all interviews if the PCSA has determined that a principal of the report has any factor that causes a barrier in communication, including but not limited to a principal of the report who is deaf or hearing impaired, has limited English proficiency or is developmentally delayed.

(W) For all reports involving a substance affected infant pursuant to rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code, the PCSA is to:

(1) Ensure the plan of safe care/family care plan has been developed.

(2) Ensure the plan of safe care/family care plan addresses the safety needs of the infant.

(3) Ensure the plan of safe care/family care plan addresses the health and substance use disorder treatment needs of the affected family or caregiver.

(X) No later than sixty calendar days from the date the PCSA screened in the referral, the PCSA is to:

(1) Complete the report disposition.

(2) Arrive at a final case decision by completing the "Specialized Assessment and Investigation."

(Y) Investigative activities conducted independently by other agencies do not relieve the PCSA of its responsibility for concluding an assessment/investigation in accordance with this rule. The PCSA will not waive the completion of the report disposition.

(Z) No later than three days from the date of the completion of the report disposition, the PCSA is to notify the out-of-home care entity's representative pursuant to section 2151.421 of the Revised Code and the out-of-home care entity's licensing authority.



(AA) No later than five business days after completion of the specialized assessment/investigation, the PCSA is to do all of the following as applicable:

- (1) Notify the alleged child victim, unless the child is not of an age or developmental capacity to understand, and the child's parent(s), guardian(s), or custodian(s) of the report disposition and the final case decision.
- (2) Notify the alleged perpetrator in writing of the report disposition; the right to appeal; the PCSA's appeal process including timeframes; and the method by which the alleged perpetrator may appeal the disposition as outlined in rule 5101:2-33-20 of the Administrative Code.
- (3) Refer all children under the age of three to "Help Me Grow" for early intervention services if there is a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect regardless of the child's role in the report.
- (4) Refer any substance affected infant pursuant to rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code to "Help Me Grow."
- (5) Notify all participants involved in the plan of safe care/family care plan and identified on the current release of information signed by the infant's parent, guardian, or custodian of the final case decision. The final decision includes whether the case will be transferred for ongoing PCSA services, closed and referral made to community services, or closed. The following plan of safe care/family care plan participants are to be notified:
 - (a) Parents, guardians, custodians or other caregivers for the infant.
 - (b) Health care providers involved in the delivery or care of the infant.
 - (c) Collaborating professional partners and agencies involved in caring for the infant and family.
- (6) Notify the child's non-custodial parent, who holds residual parental rights to the child and maintains an ongoing relationship through visitation with the child and/or payment of child support, of the receipt of the report, the report disposition, and the case decision.



(7) Document in Ohio's CCWIS, the date and method of notification to the principals of the report of the above listed activities.

(BB) No later than seven calendar days after the completion of the specialized assessment/investigation the PCSA is to provide written notice to all referents who are mandated reporters in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

(CC) The assessment/investigation documentation and any materials obtained as a result of the assessment/investigation are to be maintained in the case record. If any needed information gathering activity cannot be completed, justification and the approval of the director or the designee are to be documented in Ohio's CCWIS in accordance with rule 5101:2-36-11 of the Administrative Code.