
OVERVIEW

A face-to-face contact with the parents (including non-custodial parents) and/or other persons responsible for the health and welfare of the child, the alleged perpetrator, and each alleged victim(s) is required for all complaints that are assigned for field investigation. If a face-to-face contact is not made with the non-custodial parent, document why in the DHS-154, Investigation Report.

Determining the urgency of the face-to-face contact with the child victim is an initial component of the investigation and is dictated by the risk to the child victim. The Children's Protective Services (CPS) Minimal Priority Response Criteria guides decision-making from the receipt of the complaint to ensure the appropriate response is determined at assignment. In some circumstances, the criteria allow 72 hours to make face-to-face contact with the child victim, but making the contact within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint is best practice; see [PSM 712-4, Minimal Priority Response Criteria for more information](#). The focus of a CPS investigation must always be on the immediate safety of the child.

Face-to-Face Contact

The face-to-face contact must be:

- I. **Priority One Response (12/24)**. A face-to-face contact must take place as soon as possible with each child victim within 24 hours.
- II. **Priority Two Response (24/72)**. A face-to-face contact must take place with each child victim within 72 hours.

The Michigan Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (MiSACWIS) automatically determines whether the standard of promptness for face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim(s) was met. The determination is based on when the face-to-face contact with the last alleged child victim occurred.

Face-to-face contact with the parents and other persons responsible for the health and welfare of the child and the alleged perpetrator should occur as soon as possible in the course of the investigation.

**Timely Entry of
Face-to-Face
Social Work
Contacts into
MiSACWIS CPS**

CPS must enter all social work contacts into the MiSACWIS within 5 business days of contact. Social work contacts include face-to-face, collateral contacts, caseworker contacts with children, parents and foster parents/relative/unrelated caregivers.

Families First contractors must submit all face-to-face contacts with children, parents and foster parents/relative/unrelated caregivers to the CPS workers by the third business day of every month.

Reports received from Families First workers must be entered into MiSACWIS **within 5 business days** of receipt.

Notification of Missed Face-to-Face Contact

If the face-to-face contact standard of promptness (SOP) was or will be missed, notify the supervisor by completing the Exception Request. The notification must document the reasons the SOP was or will be missed. **The notification does not extend the timeframe for completion of the SOP or provide approval for the missed SOP; it only provides notice to the supervisor.**

When the notification is submitted, the supervisor will automatically be alerted via email.

**Complaints
Assigned for CPS
Field Investigation**

All complaints must have a face-to-face contact with all children or, at least, verification of the safety and whereabouts of **all** children, including children who reside in another location. The parents (including non-custodial parents) and other persons responsible for the health and welfare of the child and the alleged perpetrator, all other appropriate children, and significant adults must be interviewed as soon as possible after the complaint assignment or the reason(s) for not doing so must be documented in the DHS-154, Investigation Report. The Forensic Interviewing Protocol (DHS Pub-779-revised 4/11), must be followed when interviewing children during the CPS investigation.

If the worker experiences difficulty gaining access to the alleged perpetrator or victim, specific actions must be taken as outlined in

[PSM 713-08-Special Investigative Situations, Cases In Which A Family, An Alleged Perpetrator Or Child Cannot Be Located section.](#)

Special Note: According to the Child Protection Law (CPL), MCL 722.628c, the child reported to have been abused or neglected must **not** be interviewed in the presence of an individual suspected to have perpetrated the abuse. If the CPS worker experiences difficulty gaining access to the victim, a court order must be sought to interview the alleged victim(s) without the alleged perpetrator being present.

**Use of Law
Enforcement for
Initial Face-to-Face
Contact
Requirements**

Face-to-face contact by law enforcement with the child victim may be considered as satisfying the CPS initial face-to-face contact requirement (required 24 or 72 hour face-to-face). This should be documented by entering the social work contact into MiSACWIS and indicate that law enforcement's contact with the child victim is being used to meet the initial face-to-face contact requirement. This may be done in the following circumstances:

- When law enforcement has had a face-to-face contact with the child victim **after** the CPS complaint has been received and the face-to-face contact occurs within the appropriate priority response time frame required for CPS.
- When law enforcement makes a complaint to CPS **subsequent** to having a face-to-face contact with the child victim and this contact has occurred within the past 24 hours.

Note: When entering the contact in the social work contacts hyperlink, use the date and time of complaint to indicate the face-to-face contact date and time.

These guidelines refer to authorized utilization of law enforcement for the **initial face-to-face** contact requirement only (including after hours complaints). CPS must still commence an investigation within the required priority response time. Further, a face-to-face contact by law enforcement with the child victim may not be substituted for a required CPS investigative interview of the child victim, except as noted in [PSM 712-3-Coordination With Prosecuting Attorney and](#)

[Law Enforcement, Law Enforcement Interviews of Alleged Perpetrators and Alleged Victims sections.](#)

Note: Even after the initial face-to-face contact requirement has been met by CPS or law enforcement, CPS must proceed with additional face-to-face contacts, investigation, or intervention as promptly as needed to ensure the safety of the child(ren) involved.

FIELD INVESTIGATION HOME VISITS

There are certain circumstances during an investigation when a scheduled or an unscheduled home visit is appropriate. The CPS priority is to ensure the safety of children when they remain in the home. In any situation in which a home call is not or cannot be completed, document the reason why on the DHS-154. A home visit must occur as part of each investigation.

Scheduled Home Visit

Workers may use scheduled home visits in the following circumstances:

- When unscheduled face-to-face contacts with the family or other non-parent adults are unsuccessful or difficult, such as when both parents are working and not available during normal working hours.
- When the worker needs to interview the parents or other non-parent adults as soon as possible, such as when a child has been hospitalized with injuries.
- When worker safety dictates a scheduled visit.
- When a child cannot be located for a school interview and there is a need to see the person responsible and child.

Unscheduled Home Visits

Workers must use unscheduled home visits in the following circumstances:

- To determine actual home conditions and monitor child safety.

- To interview children before parents or other nonparent adults have an opportunity to intervene and coach them in their responses to the interview, if contact is not possible at school or other settings.
- To measure risks to children when caretakers are allegedly allowing children to be exposed to unsafe adults or situations; for example, sex offenders, substance abusers, past perpetrators of child abuse and neglect or domestic violence.
- To ensure safety; for example, if there is a joint investigation with law enforcement and an unscheduled joint visit is determined to be the best plan of action.
- When intake information suggests urgency; for example, that small children are left alone or not properly supervised and the worker must act quickly to assess safety of the child.
- To interview an alleged perpetrator before they have the opportunity to compromise evidence.
- To act on intake information; for example, the reporting person indicates that the alleged perpetrator has been informed that a complaint will be made. The alleged perpetrator may expect the allegations to be investigated and attempt to evade the worker.

Entering a Home When a Parent/Adult is Not Present

CPS must not enter a home when an adult member of the household or an adult baby-sitter (left in charge of the children and home) is not present to give that authorization. CPS must not enter a home if a child is home without adult supervision (adult member of the household or adult baby-sitter) even if the child gives permission.

Note: If a complaint alleges that a very young child is home alone or a child is at imminent risk of harm, CPS should request that law enforcement accompany them on the home visit; see [PSM 713-08, Special Investigative Situations, When A Child is Home Alone section.](#)

**Interviewing a
Child at Home
When a
Parent/Adult is Not
Present**

CPS must not interview a child at their home unless an adult member of the household or an adult baby-sitter (left in charge of the children and the home) gives permission to interview the child. **CPS must not interview a child at their home if a child is home without adult supervision** (adult member of the household or adult baby-sitter), even if the child gives permission.

Note: The adult member of the household or adult baby-sitter must give permission for CPS to enter the home in addition to interviewing the child, if the interview will be conducted inside the home.

See the Entering a Home When A Parent/Adult is Not Present section above for more information on entering the home.

**Presence of
Support Persons
During Interview(s)
of Adults**

Occasionally, a parent, non-parent adult and/or the alleged perpetrator may want a friend, relative, or other support person to be present during an interview. The Child Protection Law does not prohibit the use of a support person during an interview nor does it require CPS to inform the parents or adults that a support person can be present.

When it is requested that a support person be present during the interview, the CPS worker must:

- Ensure that the request or use of a support person does not delay or impede the investigation. This may include a verbal notification prior to the interview and termination of the interview at any point if necessary.
- Inform the support person at the beginning of the interview that information obtained during the interview is confidential and subject to the Child Protection Law and that release of this information has civil and criminal penalties. The DHS-860, CPS

Support Person Letter, must be signed by the support person prior to initiating the interview and placed in the file.

INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENTS OF CHILDREN

Interviewing Children at School or Other Institution

Whenever possible, children must be interviewed apart from their parents, guardian and other adult household members. This may mean interviewing a child at an institution such as a child care center, hospital, school, etc. Children must not be interviewed in the presence of the alleged perpetrator. The Forensic Interviewing Protocol (DHS Pub-779-revised 4/11) must be followed when interviewing children.

If access to the child occurs within a hospital, the investigation must be conducted so as not to interfere with the medical treatment of the child or other patients (MCL 722.628(10)).

Under the CPL, MCL 722.628(8), MDHHS has the responsibility for notifying parents or guardians that the child was interviewed at school or other institution. Temporary delay is permitted, if the notice would compromise the safety of the child or the child's siblings or the integrity of the investigation.

When approaching a school to conduct an interview with a child, the worker must review with a designated school staff person MDHHS' responsibility under the CPL, MCL 722.628(9) and the investigation procedures. After the interview with the child at school, the worker must meet with the designated school staff person and the child about the response MDHHS will take as a result of the contact.

The worker may meet with the designated school staff person without the child present to share additional information.

The CPL, MCL 722.628(8) requires schools and other institutions to cooperate, however lack of cooperation by the school or institution does not relieve or prevent MDHHS from proceeding with its responsibilities under the CPL, MCL 722.628(9).

Note: Private schools are not required under the CPL to cooperate with a CPS investigation.

Electronic Recording

Electronic recording practices vary among local offices. Video or audio recording must only be done with the approval of the prosecuting attorney. If your local office chooses to video or audio tape, the Forensic Interviewing Protocol (DHS Pub-779-revised 4/11) must be followed.

Interviewing Aids

When properly trained, CPS workers may use interviewing aids such as anatomical dolls, body outlines, timelines, etc. and the Forensic Interviewing Protocol must be followed (DHS Pub-779-revised 4/11).

Visual Assessment

Physical Abuse/Neglect Cases

If the investigation is in response to a complaint of physical abuse or neglect, and the child has not already been medically examined, the worker must make an effort to view (subject to restrictions listed below) the part of the child's body which is alleged to have sustained injury. The child's parent or legal guardian must be asked to remove the child's clothing so the alleged injuries are visible.

It may be appropriate to look at an infant's diaper rash or welts or bruises on the limbs or back of an older child. However, for children older than an infant, workers must not attempt to view the genitalia or breasts of female children or genitalia of male children. This must be done by a qualified medical professional.

Viewing the buttocks of children **age six and under** is appropriate with verbal permission from a parent/legal guardian. Viewing the buttocks of children **age seven and over** requires written permission from a parent or legal guardian. The DHS-708, Visual Assessment Permission Letter, may be used to obtain the required written permission from a parent or legal guardian. In all situations not requiring written consent, clothing must not be removed without verbal parental or guardian consent to view alleged injuries. When verbal consent is obtained, the worker must document the consent in the narrative section of the DHS-154.

No child shall be subjected to a search at a school which requires the child to remove his or her clothing to expose a male's buttocks or genitalia or a female's breasts, buttocks or genitalia unless the

department has obtained an order from a court of competent jurisdiction permitting such a search (MCL 722.628(10)).

Regardless of the parents' or legal guardian's cooperation, the worker is to proceed to secure a medical examination, if appropriate. The absence of visible marks or bruises is not to be used as a basis for not securing a medical examination; [see PSM 713-04, Medical Examination and Assessment.](#)

Sexual Abuse

Given the very technical nature of sexual abuse examinations; see [PSM 713-04, Medical Examination and Assessment](#), and the need to have highly trained physicians do the examinations, CPS workers or teams of CPS workers are not to conduct physical examinations or visual assessments when conducting a sexual abuse investigation, regardless of the age of the child.

Photographs

Taking photographs of injuries is an accepted practice in documenting evidence. CPS must not take photographs of the genitalia, buttocks of male children or genitalia, buttocks or breasts of female children, including infants. These photographs must be taken by medical personnel during a medical examination.

If the child has bruises, marks or injuries that have not been photographed by CPS because of the visual assessment restrictions, CPS is to request that photographs be taken by medical personnel during a medical examination, if a medical examination is being done; see [PSM 713-04, Medical Examination and Assessment.](#)