



South Carolina Department of Social Services

Work Aid 3.4: Conducting Interviews

Supplemental to DSS Policy: Chapter 3: Investigations

Interviewing children or youth is a crucial step in gathering information. Children or youth are often privy to substantial family information and dynamics. Even when no abuse or neglect has occurred, interviewing a child or youth can help the case manager best know what protective factors are in place (or need to be in place) to prevent maltreatment.

A. Interviewing and Observing the Alleged Victim Child or Youth	1. Complete a face-to-face contact with the victim child or youth. a. This interview should be conducted separately and alone. b. Position yourself at the child's eye level. This may require sitting on the floor or in a child's chair. c. Describe your role in a child-friendly way. d. At no time should the case manager discuss or disclose the allegations to the child. e. Be relaxed and start with some easy and fun questions. f. Consider a child or youth's developmental age in how you interview. Some children do great being asked to draw a picture of the family, then describe what they drew and what each person is like. g. If the location of this contact is to be in a school, please refer to Investigations Work Aid 3.9: School Contact. Note: The case manager should make any and all efforts to prevent child(ren) from hearing the allegations and should not read the allegations to any child(ren). 2. If the alleged victim child or youth does not communicate verbally or when communication is not possible with the case manager, the case manager will observe the child or youth's physical condition and behavior, relative to the allegations and best practice standards, and specifically document these observations in CAPSS. • Consult with your local Child Advocacy Center as needed for assistance with child or youth interviews. 3. Use a work phone camera or a work-issued camera to take pictures of the home and children or youth. If the alleged victim child or youth has physical injuries or other observable conditions (i.e. rash, malnourished, etc.), the case manager will make a direct observation and provide a written description of the observed conditions and injuries in CAPSS. At a minimum, the documentation describes details of location, color, length, shape, and size of any injury or observable condition. Note: All notes from interviews with children and adults must be entered into CAPSS. It is not permissible for case managers to record interviews.
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B. Interviewing Recipients and Collateral Contacts	1. Case managers must interview all recipients as well as collateral contacts. Collateral contacts consist of any person that knows the victim, the family's circumstances, and any other information that assists with assessing the family. 2. Recipient and collateral contact witness list • Alleged victim • Alleged perpetrator • Reporter • Eyewitness • Other children or youth in the home • Other adults in the home • Treating professionals • Child care and school staff • Custodial parent • Non-custodial parent • Child abuse pediatrician, when applicable • Guardians ad Litem • Law Enforcement Officer • Victim Advocate Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Case managers interview all other persons who may have witnessed the abuse or neglect or have relevant information regarding the circumstances of the alleged victim child or youth and family. This includes other adults in the home or community, professionals, or staff of other agencies. 3. Law enforcement and case managers work collaboratively to interview the alleged offender. 4. If there is more than one alleged offender, interviews are conducted separately
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