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|  | <b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES<br/>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b> |                                     |
|   | <b>Chapter 4: Assessment (Investigation)</b>                         | <b>Effective Date: July 1, 2007</b> |
|   | <b>Section 12: Courtesy Interviews</b>                               | <b>Version: 1</b>                   |

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| <b>POLICY [NEW]</b> | <b>OLD POLICIES: 210.52; 210.541</b> |
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- It is the policy of the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) that the local DCS Office with jurisdiction over an assessment (investigation) will conduct the required interviews.
- However, it may be appropriate for an alternate local DCS Office to conduct a courtesy interview due to issues such as but not limited to, excessive travel distances and conflicts of interest.
- The decision regarding the appropriateness of a courtesy interview will be made at the Supervisor (or higher) level. In general, courtesy interviews that are being requested due to excessive travel times will not be granted unless the assessing (investigating) FCM would have to travel more than one hour (one way) from his/her local office or home.
- DCS will conduct courtesy interviews for Child Welfare agencies in other states when personnel from that State would experience excessive travel to conduct the interview.
- As with standard interviews, in conducting a courtesy interview DCS will make every effort to use audio/video equipment to record the interview.

Code References

- N/A

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| <b>PROCEDURE</b> |
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The assessing (investigating) FCM in the local DCS Office that has jurisdiction over the assessment (investigation) will:

- Contact his/her Supervisor if he/she believes a courtesy interview is appropriate.
- Explain why a courtesy interview is the most efficient and effective method for conducting the interview.

If he/she agrees, the Supervisor in the local DCS Office that has jurisdiction over the assessment (investigation) will:

- Contact a Supervisor at the local DCS Office (or at the out-of-state agency) where the courtesy interview will take place.
- Discuss the specific circumstances that make a courtesy interview desirable.
- If it is mutually agreed that a courtesy interview is appropriate, relay the details of the assessment (investigation), including the allegations and information that is pertinent to the safety of the FCM who will conduct the courtesy interview.
- Discuss and agree upon a completion date for the interview(s) to be conducted and for the documentation to be mailed.

The Supervisor in the local DCS Office that is conducting the courtesy interview will:

- Assign the interview to an FCM.
- Assure that the interview is completed by the agreed upon deadline.

- Assure that all notes and any audio/video recordings from the interview are mailed to the requesting Supervisor within the agreed upon deadline.

The FCM conducting the courtesy interview(s) will:

- Explain to the person(s) being interviewed that the interview is part of an assessment (investigation) being conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ (county/state).
- Follow all policies and procedures outlined in all applicable interviewing policies (see separate policies, Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator, Interviewing Children and Interviewing the Parent/Guardian/Custodian).
- Type any hand-written notes to assure legibility before delivering all interview documentation (including any audio/video recordings) to his/her Supervisor.

#### RELATED INFORMATION

##### Logistics Example

The alleged child victim lives in County A and is transported more than an hour to a hospital in County B for medical care. County A has jurisdiction over the assessment (investigation) but may ask County B to conduct a courtesy interview at the hospital to prevent extensive travel.

##### Courtesy Assessments of Home Conditions

Courtesy assessments of home conditions should be handled on a case-by-case basis. In general, best practice is for the assigned FCM in the County that has jurisdiction over the assessment (investigation) to conduct the home conditions assessment so that he/she has first-hand knowledge about the conditions of the home. This is especially important if the FCM must later make recommendations regarding placement. For more information see separate policy, Assessing Home Conditions.

#### FORMS AND TOOLS

- N/A