Department of Children's Services

14.7, Multi-Disciplinary Team: Child Protective Investigative Team
Application: All Department of Children's Services (DCS) Child Protective Services (CPS) staff, including the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) and Supervisors
Authority: TCA: 37-1-401 et seq.; 37-1-601 et seq.; 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106; 37-5-107; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as amended, see 42 USC 5101 et seq.; 42 USC 5116 et seq., and 45 CFR 1340.
Standards: **COA:** PA-CFS 4.09 and 4.10
Original Effective Date: October 29, 2021
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Commissioner: Margie Quin
Margie Quin

Glossary:

Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT):

A legally mandated multi-disciplinary team that conducts an investigation of alleged sexual abuse or other severe child abuse.

CPS/SIU Supervisor:

All levels of direct CPS/SIU management from the Team Leader, up to and including, the Commissioner of the Department of Children's Services.

Policy Statement:

The Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT) serves as the statutorily mandated Multi- Disciplinary Team (MDT) in Tennessee. The Department of Children's Services uses the MDT approach during investigations of severe child abuse to ensure completion of a strategic and thorough investigation, as well as providing child victims with the needed supports to ensure their safety.

Purpose:

To identify the composition of the CPIT and establish the role and responsibilities of DCS in the CPIT process.

Procedures:

A. CPIT Composition

1. Each team shall be composed of the following Child Welfare professionals:
   a) One staff member from the DCS Child Protective Services (CPS).
   b) One representative from the Office of the District Attorney General.
   c) One juvenile court officer or investigator from a court of competent jurisdiction.
   d) For cases involving an allegation that a child is a victim of a human trafficking offense, the team must include a representative from one (1) non-governmental agency specialized in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of minors.
   e) One law enforcement officer with county-wide jurisdiction from the county where the child resides or where the alleged abuse occurred.
   f) The Director of the Children's Advocacy Center, or designee.
2. The team may also include the following individuals:
   a) A representative from the medical field.
   b) A representative from the mental health field.

B. Convening CPIT and Developing Case Strategy

1. CPS/SIU convenes the appropriate CPIT, with CPS/SIU following local CPIT protocols regarding the timing, locations, procedures, and expectations for convening CPIT, when a report of child sexual abuse or severe child abuse has been received or identified.
2. The CPS/SIU Case Manager follows local protocols for submitting written documentation notifying the District Attorney of a case alleging sexual abuse or severe child abuse within three (3) days of convening CPIT.
3. The CPIT determines investigative tasks and assigns responsibilities to team members when convening CPIT.
4. DCS shall comply with its statutory obligations regarding cases of child sexual abuse and severe abuse as set forth in Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 37-1-605 et seq. DCS shall make reasonable efforts to coordinate investigative tasks with CPIT members; however, these efforts shall not delay or impede DCS' statutory obligations when responding to an allegation of abuse or completing its investigation. Types of applicable investigative tasks may be reviewed in DCS policy ***14.6, Child Protective Services Case Tasks and Responsibilities.***
5. The CPIT determines immediate safety risks to the Alleged Child victims (ACV) or other children.

C. CPIT Strategy

1. During the CPIT meetings the team shall discuss and determine:
   a) The ACV's family composition and demographics, including which person(s) is responsible for the ACV's welfare and if there are other children in the care of that person.
   b) Whether any other child(ren) is the victim of child abuse or neglect.
      - If any other child(ren) is the victim of child abuse or neglect, the child is added as a victim in the Electronic Record System.
   c) The person(s) responsible for causing the abuse.
   d) Whether long-term risks to the ACV and/or other children are present.
   e) What services are necessary to safeguard the ACV and to preserve and stabilize family life.
2. With approval of the CPS/SIU Supervisor, DCS investigative tasks may be delegated or delayed in the following situations, provided the requirements outlined in Section B, number four (4) are met:
   a) There are no identified safety concerns for the ACV or other children in the household and a law enforcement agency, District Attorney, or Medical Examiner's office has requested that CPS/SIU delay and/or refrain from interviewing certain individuals to preserve or enhance a criminal investigation.
   b) CPIT members are permitted to request that CPS/SIU case activities be completed in a certain order or timeframe to support the criminal investigation or court process.

D. Classification of CPIT Cases

1. The CPS/SIU Case Manager reviews the case with their supervisor and determines that all relevant information is included and documented in the case recordings in the Electronic Record System.
2. The CPS/SIU Case Manager is prepared to present and discuss the case with the CPIT members when the case is on the CPIT schedule. To prepare for the meeting, the investigator will do the following:
   a) Discuss the case with their supervisor or their designee.
   b) Prepare documentation to share with CPIT members attending the meeting.
   c) Review the ***Protocol for Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT) Presentation for the Office of Child Safety Investigative Staff.***
3. The CPS/SIU Case Manager discusses the information gathered during the investigation with all members of the CPIT and provides the recommended DCS classification(s) for the CPIT's consideration.
4. The allegation classification will be determined by the CPIT after a thorough review of each

allegation and the evidence presented. The CPIT will come to a majority consensus regarding the classification decision.

a) Majority consensus applies **only** to severe abuse allegations. Non-severe allegation classification decisions will be determined by DCS only, though input obtained from the CPIT may be taken into consideration.

5. Each CPIT member indicates their agreement or disagreement with the investigation classification recommended by DCS on **CS-0561, Child Protective Investigative Team Review** and is provided the opportunity to sign the CPIT form. Any CPIT member's concerns about classification are noted on the CPIT form.
6. Form **CS-0561, Child Protective Investigative Team** will be provided to the presenting CPS/SIU Case Manager at the conclusion of the CPIT meeting.
7. The CPS/SIU Case Manager documents the CPIT discussion, including the specific factors that impacted how the CPIT came to its decision, and allegation classification in case recordings in the Electronic Record System.
8. Should DCS **disagree** with the classification decision made by the CPIT and wish to overturn the CPIT decision, the CPIT information will be provided to the DCS CPS Director, who will review the decision.

   a) If the CPS Director believes the CPIT has made an error in their classification decision, the CPS Director, with approval from their chain of command, may appeal the decision to a DCS Deputy Commissioner.

   b) If an appeal is approved to proceed, the DCS Deputy Commissioner will review the investigative evidence and determine a final classification decision within 10 (ten) business days.

      - Should the Deputy Commissioner uphold the CPIT classification decision, the Deputy Commissioner's decision will be final with no further review.

   c) If the Deputy Commissioner agrees to overturn the CPIT decision, the Deputy Commissioner will forward this decision and recommended classification to the DCS Commissioner for final approval. The DCS Commissioner's decision is final, and no further review will be conducted.

Forms:

CS-0561, Child Protective Investigative Team Review

Collateral Documents:

Protocol for Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT) Presentation for the Office of Child Safety Investigative Staff