

## INS Investigations and QPI

**30.1 Intent.** Nevada Revised Statutes mandate the investigation of child abuse and neglect in any institution in which a child resides.

*Standards for the investigation of child abuse and neglect in institutional settings are set by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). (Refer to Appendix I-B, Residential Institutions, page 432B-19.)*

**30.4 Purpose.** The purpose of the investigation is to assure the protection of the children residing in a residential institution, while respecting the integrity of the facility operation.

*When child abuse and neglect reports are investigated, a distinction must be made between suspected noncompliance with licensing standards and abuse or neglect of a child. When an investigation reveals a problem in the operation of the facility or licensing standard and not one of child abuse or neglect to a child, the matter will be referred to the licensing authority in licensed facilities and in public facilities to the authorizing agency.*

*Abuse and neglect investigations are appropriate only when there is reason to suspect that a child has been harmed or is threatened with harm. The purpose of the investigation is twofold:*

- A. To protect the alleged victim and other children in care from immediate danger; and*
- B. To assess and evaluate the facility's ability to assure the child can be protected.*

- **Education and Outreach:** On July 10, 2013 at the QPI foster parent support group the investigator did a presentation on the institutional investigation. It went very well and the feedback was positive. People expressed understanding the process decreased anxiety. Pierre and his back-up (Norm Enlow) attended QPI committee-Retention to discuss institutional investigations. A survey has been sent out to foster parent who have been investigated (and were unsubstantiated) since July 2013 for their feedback. A separate survey has been sent out involved foster parents for their suggestions and feedback as well. The suggestions made during the July presentations have been made. We utilize investigations as a time to “educate” our foster parents or as Pierre says “do preventative maintenance” with foster parents. The use of incident reports for injuries can be helpful. Also, educating foster parents about reporting injuries in a timely manner and to include the worker, licensing worker and liaison on the emails. We encourage foster parents to talk to the parents of the child and explain to them how an injury occurred. Ice breakers and building a positive and open relationship between the bio-parents and foster parents is critical.
- **Consistency:** Washoe County uses primarily one person to do all institutional investigations. This helps to provide consistency. Also, the same person who supervised foster care licensing also supervises the institutional abuse investigator. This keeps the investigations centralized and allows for joint investigations in a timely manner.

***30.5 The Team Approach. Investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect in institutional settings may be conducted by a team. The decision to use a team approach should be made by the Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker and supervisor. When a team is used, a Department caseworker is the lead team member. A team may consist of a CPS caseworker, representative of the facility, licensing or regulatory agency, law enforcement agency, the District Attorney's (DA) office, member from a discipline similar to the institution where the complaint occurred, or other expert. Team members should be selected based on their expertise and insight they will bring to the investigation.***

- **Teaming-** The investigator teams with licensing and others to include the child's assigned worker, law enforcement and others depending on the case. Often times a joint investigation occurs. This results in the children and foster parents being interviewed one time so it is less intrusive and makes for a faster investigation with a resolution in a timelier manner. The institutional abuse investigator and licensing workers are located only feet away from each other, so they work investigations together.

### ***30.11 Findings and Recommendations***

***A. Within 30 days of completion of the investigation, the team, if one has been formed, shall review the case and agree on the case findings...***

- **Fast closures & open communication:** Because our investigator's primary assignment is institutional abuse investigations they get his undivided attention. While Pierre has 30 days by policy to close an investigation, he often is able to complete a complete investigation within two-three weeks, sometimes sooner, because he can focus on the investigation and interview all the parties in a timelier manner. (The exception is when Law Enforcement is involved as at times we are waiting on them for interviews.)
- **Transparency-**Our belief is "honesty is the best policy" and we attempt to be very open and transparent with foster parents. We openly and honestly work with foster parents so that they understand what we are investigating and why while protecting the confidentiality of the reporting party.

***Refer to SECTION 30 of the Washoe County Policy "INVESTIGATING NEGLECT/ABUSE IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS"***