

Child Protective Services: Investigation

2104.10a Obtaining Offender and Conviction Data

Discussion

Parents sometimes make poor choices of person (other parent, relative, boyfriend, girlfriend, others) they allow in a caretaker role for their children or to have access to the children. Sometimes, persons who are given this responsibility or access to children place the children at much higher risk of maltreatment. A child's risk level often rises significantly when a person with known criminal activity is allowed a major role in the child's life. By not taking this information into consideration, the department may allow a child's safety to become compromised.

It is especially important to use available links to obtain information about a person's criminal background and to use knowledge gained to determine whether that person might be a poor choice by a parent to have contact with children or to be given child care responsibilities. "Red flag" findings include felony conviction for (1) child abuse or neglect, (2) spousal abuse, (3) crimes against children, including pornography, (4) crimes involving violence, including rape, sexual assault or homicides, (5) physical assault, (6) battery and (7) drug or alcohol related offenses.

Requirement

At both investigation and ongoing service provision, a Georgia Criminal Investigation Check (GCIC) check for criminal history is required on any person who is identified as a significant other to a household member or who takes on a caretaking role to children in the household. This includes persons considered for a temporary out-of-home placement (see 2104.33). For each person found living in a household or who has frequent contact with children in the household also:

- Use IDS/PSDS and the IDS Online links (Department of Corrections, Sexual Offender Registry and Board of Pardons and Parole) as information sources to determine if a person has CPS or conviction history in Georgia. These links are a resource for a quick check of this history.

When CPS and/or criminal conviction information is discovered:

- Staff the case with the supervisor, social service administrator, county director, Field Program Specialist and/or SAAG.
- Determine (1) whether the child remains safe and protected, (2) whether the child is no longer conditionally safe and court action is required, (3) whether risk level has changed and the family plan needs to be revised or (4) whether other safety measures are required.
- Take all necessary steps to protect a child whenever the information obtained indicates that a person's access to a child may place the child at higher risk of maltreatment.
- Document any CPS history and criminal conviction information in the case record.