

Child Protective Services: Investigation

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2104 Investigation

2104.1 Introduction

As mandated by law, the Georgia Department of Human Resources investigates reports of suspected child maltreatment. The local county Department of Family and Children Services conducts the investigation to determine whether an incident of maltreatment occurred and, if maltreatment is substantiated, to determine the level of risk for future maltreatment to the child and to plan for the child's safety and protection.

Investigation is a process to determine the validity of a complaint by interviewing, observing and gathering information. This process leads to decisions about the level of risk for future maltreatment to the child, the degree of safety and the need for the continued involvement of the agency until protection of the child is ensured.

The investigation is completed within 30 calendar days of the date the report is received.

Investigation Decisions:

- Is this a case of child maltreatment?
- What safety responses are required for the child's protection?
- What is the level of risk of future maltreatment to the child?
- Are there emergency needs in the family which must be met?
- What is the family's potential for participation with child protective services?
- What community resources exist?
- Does this case meet local county protocol criteria regarding joint investigative status with law enforcement personnel?

Components Of The Investigation:

- Review the report and determine the best approach;
- Coordinate, as necessary, with law enforcement;
- Make the initial contact with child and with parent;
- Plan additional needed contacts with child and parent;

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- Gather all available evidence;
- Make collateral contacts;
- Determine degree of protection and safety of the child;
- Determine risk level;
- Continue to coordinate, as needed, with law enforcement regarding possible criminal prosecution;
- Make a case determination and send required notifications of decisions; and,
- Document.