

# Child Protective Services: Investigation

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## 2104.12 Initial Contact Made with Child Away From Home

### Requirement

When physical/sexual abuse is alleged, make every possible effort to initially see the child at a location away from the parent, giving the child an opportunity to discuss the abuse in a neutral setting. Look for **all** alleged physical injuries and evaluate observed abuse for needed medical treatment. Begin a determination of the type intervention required.

In addition to meeting with the child outside the home, observe interactions between the parent and the child in the home **as part of all investigations** (unless the child is already removed by a court order or is in a safe environment, e.g., foster home).

### Procedures/Practice Issues

Determine documentation methods for verification of any visible injuries (e.g. taking photographs of the injury, documenting the outline of the injury on an anatomical drawing, using free-hand drawings that depict the injury). Request assistance from local law enforcement photo ID units to photograph significant injuries.

The school is the most common place away from home to meet with children prior to parental notification. Agree on steps for contacting children at school through the local school superintendent's office and the local protocol committee. Request assistance from local law enforcement, as needed, to gain access to children. Notify the State Consultation and Support Unit and/or Protective Services Unit if problems persist.

Steps for an initial visit at school:

- Telephone the principal or designee, prior to going to the school, to initiate the plan to interview the child in response to a report of suspected maltreatment;
- Speak with the principal and/or designee upon arrival at the school;
- Present identification. The school may contact CPS administrative staff for verification;

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- Request, only as needed, that a school staff person sit in on the interview with the child. Let the determining factor be the child's wishes and need for support or for privacy. Inform the staff person of the possibility of being called as a witness if the case requires court involvement;
- Do not disclose the referral source to the child and/or school staff, as this violates confidentiality policy; and,
- Be prepared to contact local law enforcement if the interview with the child indicates a significant maltreatment incident and/or imminent risk.