

COORDINATION OF CHILD WITNESS TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are being implemented in an attempt to better coordinate criminal and civil intervention in domestic violence cases that involve child witnesses.

Time: These guidelines are effective June 4, 2008. **Updated: May 5, 2010**

Case Referral: Child witness to DV cases can be referred to Kids' FIRST for interviews by LEA patrol, the DV investigator, the District Attorney, or DHS/CWP.

Referral Procedure: The referral entity should immediately fax the LEA or CWP report to Kids' FIRST. This report should include any instructions given to the child's caregiver as to when and where to take the children for the interview. If the referral is directly from patrol, the normal interview time will be 1:30 the following business day. If the referral is taking place as part of follow-up activity by LEA, the D.A., or DHS/CWP, the interview should be scheduled by calling the DV Witness Coordinator at Kids' FIRST.

Kids' FIRST Procedure:

I. Interview Preparation

1. Once the interview has been scheduled, the DV Witness Coordinator will contact the DV Team. The DV team is comprised of the appropriate DHS interviewer/caseworker, the appropriate LEA investigator, Womenspace advocate, Kids' FIRST advocate, and DV Witness Coordinator.
2. In order to notify the appropriate DHS interviewer/caseworker the DV Witness Coordinator will immediately contact by phone and fax a copy of the police report to DHS Screening. The case will be assigned to the next up DV intake worker. The assigned worker will check for any previous CWP history and contact the DV Witness Coordinator to confirm interview time.
3. Members of the DV team will arrive at Kids' FIRST fifteen minutes before the scheduled interview time to share information about the case.
4. When the family arrives at Kids' FIRST, they will be greeted by the child advocate and given a packet of materials describing available services. Safety planning will be discussed, if appropriate. Needs assessment will begin.
5. If the DV victim is present, the DHS interviewer/caseworker, Womenspace advocate, and DV Investigator will speak with her/him to get background information for the interview and assess victim needs. The DV Witness Coordinator will be present at this discussion, and pass on relevant information to the advocates to better focus the advocacy and service delivery to the victim and her/his children.
6. During this discussion with the victim, the DHS interviewer/caseworker will also explain the interview process and the safety planning process as per CWP. The safety planning process will include assessment and referral for drug and alcohol treatment when appropriate.

II. During the Interview

1. The interviewer will then interview each child witness separately. The DV Investigator will observe and record the interview from a separate room. The DV Witness Coordinator will be present with LEA and will pass along relevant information disclosed during the interview to the child advocate.

2. While the interview is being conducted, the Womenspace advocate will meet privately with the victim. The Womenspace advocate will complete a shelter assessment if needed and provide information regarding Womenspace services and pre-trial monitoring services for the batterer. The Womenspace advocate will also provide information regarding domestic violence and its impact on children.

III. Post-Interview

1. When the interview/s are concluded, the DHS interviewer/caseworker, DV Witness Coordinator, DV Investigator, and Womenspace advocate will discuss next steps with the victim. This will include safety planning development by the DHS interviewer/caseworker for the victim and child if necessary. The DHS interviewer/caseworker will also provide a copy of the brochure: *What You Need to Know About a Child Protective Service Assessment*.
2. The advocates and the DV Witness Coordinator will again share information, the Coordinator will transmit any relevant information regarding services (needed and/or provided) to the coordinator/advocate at the Crime Victim's Services Program (VSP) in the D.A.'s office, who will provide on-going case management and advocacy services to the victim and children.
3. The DV Witness Coordinator at Kids' FIRST will then inform the deputy D.A. on the case that the interviews have been completed. If the DV investigator is not present, the DV Witness Coordinator will arrange to get copies of the recordings to the D.A. If the DV investigator is present he/she will deliver the recordings to the D.A.
4. Based on the outcome of the initial child safety assessment the DHS/CWP interviewer/caseworker will take appropriate action and complete the assessment as required by DHS guidelines and policy.
5. It is the DHS/CWP interviewer/caseworkers responsibility to communicate clearly any expectations the agency has of the victim parent to ensure the safety of the child(ren). The MDT agreed upon safety plan will be noted on the Safe & Together form.
6. In the event that there is a no show by the family and the child, the DHS interviewer/ caseworker will follow-up with the family and the child(ren) to ensure safety is assessed.
7. If it is determined a child is unsafe, a safety plan and/or protective action must be in place before the child leaves Kids' FIRST.

IV. Interview Follow-Up

1. A monthly DV Witness meeting will also be held at Kids' FIRST and will include LEA DV Investigators, DHS interviewers/caseworkers, Womenspace advocates, Kids' FIRST DV Witness Coordinator, and the DHS/CWP Intake Supervisor. This meeting will allow time for discussion of protocols, guidelines, and case review. Safe & Together forms will be completed as part of the review. Originals will go to DHS/CWP Intake Supervisor and a copy will remain with the DV Witness Coordinator at Kids' FIRST.
2. A monthly peer review, for DHS interviewers/caseworkers, will be held at Kids' FIRST to review taped interviews and improve interviewing skills. This meeting will be facilitated by the Kids' FIRST Interviewer and will include the DHS Intake Supervisor.



STATE OF OREGON

Department of Human Services
Kids' FIRST / Safe & Together
Critical Components Evaluation Form



DHS INTAKE WORKER: _____ DATE: _____

CASE INFORMATION

DHS CASE #: _____

BATTERER NAME: _____ DOB: _____

SURVIVOR NAME: _____ DOB: _____

SECONDARY SURVIVOR NAME(S): _____

SAFE & TOGETHER CRITICAL COMPONENTS

1. DESCRIBE PATTERN OF COERCIVE CONTROL IF PRESENT: _____

2. DESCRIBE ANY NEGATIVE EFFECTS THE BATTERER'S ACTIONS HAVE HAD ON THE CHILDREN: _____

3. DESCRIBE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE SURVIVOR TO ENSURE THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY & WELL BEING: _____

Maintain Original for DHS Records
DO NOT DISCOVER
Provide Copy to Kids' FIRST DV Witness Coordinator

4. DESCRIBE THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THE BATTERER'S BEHAVIOR HAS HAD ON THE SURVIVOR'S CAPACITY TO PROTECT: _____

5. PLEASE ILLUSTRATE WHAT ROLE THE FOLLOWING HAVE PLAYED IN THE SAFETY & WELL BEING OF THE CHILDREN:

Substance Abuse: _____

Mental Health: _____

Culture: _____

Socio-Economic: _____

Safety Plan when Leaving Kids' FIRST: _____

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