



## **STATE OF DELAWARE**

### **MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM PROTOCOL FOR SCHEDULING FORENSIC INTERVIEWS FOR CHILD VICTIMS**

#### **I. REFERRAL PROCESS**

The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) will accept referrals for forensic interviews from law enforcement agencies (LE), the Division of Family Services (DFS), the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Courts. These agencies are authorized by law to protect children by investigating allegations of child abuse or neglect.

#### **II. SCHEDULING FORENSIC INTERVIEWS**

##### **A. Request from Law Enforcement (LE)**

- (1) Prior to contacting the CAC to schedule the forensic interview of a child victim, LE will make a hotline report to DFS.
  - a. If the hotline report is screened out by DFS, LE will contact the CAC to schedule the forensic interview at a mutually acceptable date and time for LE and the victim's family.
  - b. If the hotline report is screened in by DFS, LE will obtain the name of the assigned DFS Investigation Worker and his/her Supervisor. LE will consult with the assigned DFS Investigation Worker or his/her Supervisor and the victim's family to obtain mutually acceptable dates to schedule the forensic interview. LE will then contact the CAC, notify the scheduler that he/she has made a hotline report to DFS and provide the proposed interview dates. The CAC scheduler will schedule the forensic interview and notify all parties of the date and time.
- (2) If LE determines that due to exceptional circumstances the forensic interview must be scheduled prior to contacting DFS, the CAC will comply with the request and promptly notify the Office of the Investigation Coordinator.

##### **B. Request from the Division of Family Services (DFS)**

- (1) Prior to contacting the CAC to schedule the forensic interview of the child victim, DFS will make a cross report to the appropriate LE agency.

- a. If LE accepts involvement in the case, DFS will obtain the name of the assigned LE investigating detective and his/her Sergeant. DFS will consult with the assigned LE investigating detective or his/her Sergeant and the victim's family to obtain mutually acceptable dates to schedule the forensic interview.
- b. If LE declines involvement in the case, DFS will provide the CAC with the name of the LE officer who declined involvement and the forensic interview will be scheduled for a mutually acceptable date and time for DFS and the victim's family.

(2) If DFS determines that due to exceptional circumstances the interview must be scheduled prior to contacting LE, the CAC will comply with the request and will promptly notify the Office of the Investigation Coordinator.

**C. Request via Court Order:** Upon receiving a court order mandating a forensic interview of a child, the CAC scheduler will contact the appropriate law enforcement agency, DFS, and Deputy Attorney General (DAG) to advise them of the court order to arrange a mutually acceptable date and time for the forensic interview. DFS will confirm receipt of a hotline report regarding the incident.

III. **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** There will be exceptional situations that may result in a request for an immediate forensic interview for safety considerations of the child or for the preservation of the criminal investigation, without an opportunity for prior communication with the other MDT member(s). These situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the ultimate decision-making regarding the scheduling of these situations will be the responsibility of the MDT member making the request. However, the CAC will not impede a criminal or civil investigation. If the agency requesting a forensic interview indicates that the interview be scheduled without the required MDT cross reporting and coordination as outlined in this protocol, the CAC will comply with the request and promptly notify the Office of the Investigation Coordinator. In addition, if any MDT member has concerns with the non-compliance of this protocol by any other MDT member, the Investigation Coordinator shall be promptly notified for intervention.