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*Issues and Practices*

## **Police and Child Abuse:**

**New Policies for  
Expanded Responsibilities**

129947

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**Charles B. DeWitt**

*Director*

National Institute of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
*National Institute of Justice*

# **Police and Child Abuse: New Policies For Expanded Responsibilities**

by

**Susan E. Martin  
Douglas J. Besharov**

**June 1991**

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*Issues and Practices in Criminal Justice* is a publication series of the National Institute of Justice. Designed for the criminal justice professional, each *Issues and Practices* report presents the program options and management issues in a topic area, based on a review of research and evaluation findings, operational experience, and expert opinion on the subject. The intent is to provide criminal justice managers and administrators with the information to make informed choices in planning, implementing and improving programs and practice.

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# Foreword

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Investigations of child abuse are an increasing element of the work of law enforcement agencies. This responsibility has been willingly accepted by police and sheriffs' departments as they respond to public concerns and work to enhance the quality of protection for the public.

NIJ's purpose in developing this report was to describe how law enforcement agencies are meeting this challenge, and how new state laws are changing the ways communities treat child abusers and child victims. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) helps to share successful efforts with its publication series, *Issues and Practices in Criminal Justice*. This report builds on prior NIJ publications by documenting how effective law enforcement efforts have been planned and implemented across the nation.

Statistical evidence from a broad range of state and local law enforcement agencies is presented, together with a wealth of detail from site studies in four locations, and an overview of the statutory framework for responses to child abuse and neglect. Included is a comprehensive self-assessment guide that can help any law enforcement agency review the nature and adequacy of its response to reports of child abuse.

**Charles B. DeWitt**  
*Director*  
National Institute of Justice

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# Acknowledgments

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Many people contributed to this study. We would like to thank the 122 police chiefs who agreed to participate in the survey and the many investigators who patiently responded to the questions of our telephone interviewers.

The case study information was generously provided by a large number of people in Tulsa, San Francisco, Montgomery, and Washtenaw Counties. We appreciate the willingness of Chiefs Drew Diamond, Frank Jordan, and Donald Brooks and Sheriff Ronald Schebil to subject their departments and policies to close scrutiny. Particular gratitude is due to Sergeant Don Spillers, Lieutenant Alexander Stevens, Ms. Marge Harrich, and Deputy Susan Andersen who served as liaisons in their respective counties. They arranged the site visit interviews, provided written information, patiently explained how things "work" in their agency, and served as informal ambassadors of goodwill in their jurisdictions.

Edwin Hamilton of the Police Foundation helped collect, synthesize and summarize the data collected from the participating agencies. He, together with Hattie Matthews, Marcia Trick, and Gwen Rones, conducted the telephone interviews with diplomatic persistence. Harvetta Asamoah of the American Enterprise Institute toiled tirelessly over state laws to provide an analytic summary of their provisions. Barton Clark, also of the American Enterprise Institute, performed the final editing of this volume.

John Duffy, the sheriff of San Diego County; Ellen King, a detective in the New York City Police Department; James Skinner, the chief of the Omaha Police Department; and Rebecca Roe, an assistant district attorney of King County, graciously served as an advisory board to our project. Besides reviewing this report and other project reports, they provided specific guidance in selecting case-study sites and a broader perspective on the issues of concern to law enforcement practitioners.

Jan Chaiken, our Abt Associates project officer, helped design the project and lent his expertise to the data analysis and its presentation. He also helped structure this final report and guided it through the publication process.

Special thanks go to our two National Institute of Justice grant monitors, Carol Petrie and Cheryl Crawford. Carol participated in all aspects of the study from planning, through site visits, to the shaping the final report. As always, her advice and guidance were invaluable. Cheryl assumed responsibility for the final stages of the project.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Summary

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Law enforcement agencies have been involved in the management of child maltreatment longer than any other professional group.<sup>1</sup> Controversy has often surrounded their role, however, because they have dual responsibilities—apprehending criminals and protecting children—that sometimes conflict. During the 1960s, with the rapid adoption of reporting laws, primary responsibility for handling child abuse cases shifted from the police to child protective service agencies. Although child abuse remained a crime, law enforcement officials rarely sought charges because they were reluctant to involve the criminal justice system in these cases.

Law enforcement agencies can play a central role in protecting abused and neglected children. Recognizing this, an increasing number of states have amended their child abuse laws and procedures to provide for a greater police presence in child abuse cases. This report describes the way in which the police role has expanded, documents the responses of police and sheriffs' departments to these increased responsibilities, identifies some promising practices they have adopted to meet them, and points to steps they can take for improving their child-protecting efforts.

### The Changing Police Role

Until the mid-1960s, the police handled most cases of child abuse and neglect, but only a small fraction of all cases, usually those involving severe maltreatment or death, came to their attention or that of any other authority. What happened in the family was regarded as largely a private matter, and there were no laws requiring reporting. However, with the discovery of "the battered child syndrome" by the medical community and, subsequently, by the mass media, child abuse came to be defined as a social problem needing social intervention and treatment.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1963 and 1967, all states passed laws that mandated certain professionals to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Initially, reporting requirements applied only to physicians, but with time they were expanded to include more professional groups (including the police), and more forms of maltreatment. Now, most professionals who regularly see children are required to report all forms of child abuse and neglect.

These laws have resulted in a vast increase in reported cases. In 1963, about 150,000 cases of suspected maltreatment were reported. By 1987, the number of

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reports had risen to nearly 2.2 million, an increase of nearly 14 times their earlier number.<sup>3</sup> About 3 percent of the reported cases involved major physical injury and 9 percent sexual maltreatment. About 1,200 children died from abuse in 1988.<sup>4</sup> Since so many maltreated children previously went unreported, these statistics do not necessarily mean that child abuse is increasing. But it is generally acknowledged that the greater number of reports now received are the result of the passage of mandatory reporting laws and the media campaigns which accompanied them.

Concurrently with the adoption of reporting legislation, states also expanded their social services networks to provide more assistance to children. Child protective agencies were created to protect children by providing a variety of mental health and supportive services that assist parents in caring for their children. Should such measures fail to prevent abuse, child protective agencies were empowered to remove children from the home.

These new agencies assumed from police the primary responsibility for handling child abuse and neglect. Child protective agencies received and investigated most reports, seldom seeking to involve the police in their efforts to protect abused and neglected children. The police, though, as the only agency providing public service 24 hours a day, often conducted preliminary investigations when a child protection worker was unavailable. The police did not know about a large proportion of cases of abuse, either because they were not reported to them directly, or because the cases were reported to child protective services who did not inform the police. Even when the police knew about such cases, they often did not conduct follow-up investigations—and prosecutors hesitated to bring charges—out of reluctance to delve into family affairs, a belief that the problem would be better addressed through the provision of services than punishment, and uncertain prospects for conviction.

The combination of mandatory reporting laws and social service intervention protected many children from further injury and even death. According to the best estimate available, the number of child abuse deaths nationwide fell from about 3,000 in 1975 to about 1,100 ten years later.<sup>5</sup> However, gaps in protection remain. For example, between 35 to 50 percent of all fatalities attributed to suspected child abuse and neglect involve children already known to authorities.<sup>6</sup>

These failures in the protective system (often widely publicized), together with growing concerns about the handling of child sexual abuse cases, led many to conclude that greater resort to the criminal justice system was needed.<sup>7</sup> Criminal sanctions, it was felt, were a symbolic affirmation of the norm against child abuse<sup>8</sup> and, if applied sensitively, could be therapeutic.<sup>9</sup>

In keeping with this change in attitudes, state laws were amended. As described in the next chapter, over 40 states have passed legislation requiring child

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protective agencies to notify either police or local prosecutors of all or certain types of serious cases, with the expectation that these cases will be investigated. Many of these laws also require written, interagency agreements to assure coordination between social service and law enforcement agencies.<sup>10</sup>

Our findings suggest that, as a result of these changes, police agencies are investigating child abuse cases with greater frequency, are assisting child protective service workers more often, and are assuming a larger role in generally protecting children. Many departments, for example, have created child abuse squads, added specialized training for rookies and veteran officers alike, or entered into interagency agreements. They also have altered their policies and practices—and continue to do so.

## **This Study: Background, Goals, and Methods**

Despite this expansion of responsibility, researchers have only begun to examine systematically the implementation and impact of these changes on police practices.

For example, while law enforcement officers make about 13 percent of all reports received by child protective agencies nationwide,<sup>11</sup> their criteria for deciding to report are not well understood. C. Willis and R. H. Wells found that the only factor consistently related to reporting was the officer's assessment of the behavior as "serious."<sup>12</sup>

L. M. Williams, in a study of the factors influencing police involvement in investigations of sex abuse in child care settings, found that, in addition to legal and evidentiary considerations, extralegal factors such as the sex of the victim and perpetrator, day-care facility characteristics, and the type of sex act also influenced the extent of police responses.<sup>13</sup> J. Chapman et al. found that the police made arrests in about half the founded sex abuse cases they investigated. Parents were less likely to be prosecuted, and received shorter sentences, than other abusers.<sup>14</sup>

In a study of the problems of prosecuting child sexual abuse cases, D. Whitcomb et al. noted that, particularly in intrafamilial abuse cases, prosecutors and families often do not want to subject the child to the perceived trauma of the criminal justice process.<sup>15</sup> In other instances, reluctance to prosecute hinged on characteristics of the case or the victim, such as whether the crime could be established, the sufficiency of the evidence, or the reliability of the victim as a witness. Further problems stemmed from the lack of physical evidence, due to police involvement days or weeks after the abuse occurred and inadequate interviews of child victims by child protective workers.<sup>16</sup>

Data on the scope and operation of interagency coordination between police and child protective agencies are even more limited. M. A. Wycoff observed several

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models of interagency cooperation and explored the process through which such arrangements were developed.<sup>17</sup> However, she did not assess the effectiveness of the various models she identified.

The importance of more effectively addressing the problem of child abuse is heightened by recent research support for the "cycle of violence" hypothesis. C. S. Widom found that adults who were abused as children had significantly higher rates of arrests for violent offenses than those who were not.<sup>18</sup> The rates of violent offending were particularly elevated for males abused as children; females abused as children were significantly more likely than those who were not to be arrested for property, drug, and order offenses.

To document the responses of police and sheriff's agencies to their increased responsibilities for dealing with child abuse, and to identify newly-emerging police practices, the American Enterprise Institute and the Police Foundation undertook this three-part study with support from the National Institute of Justice. (For details of the methodology, see Appendix C.) Not only did we look for promising approaches, but we also probed for areas of weakness in need of improvement.

Our research began with a review of the statutory framework for police activities in cases of child abuse and neglect. The review focused on legal changes relating to reports from the police, reporting by the police, child protective agency notification of the police regarding particular cases, police assistance to child protective agencies, authorization to place children in protective custody, and cooperation among agencies.<sup>19</sup>

The second step in the study was a telephone survey of municipal and county departments conducted by the Police Foundation in the spring of 1988. It sought to: obtain information about existing policies and procedures for handling child abuse cases; examine formal and informal interagency cooperative arrangements; and identify promising strategies for dealing with physical and sexual offenses against children, including child sexual exploitation.<sup>20</sup>

We selected a 50 percent random sample of municipal and county law enforcement agencies serving jurisdictions with populations over 100,000. An impressive 86 percent (126 of the 146 departments contacted) agreed to participate in the survey; many also provided statistical data and copies of departmental policies. Phone surveys were completed with 122 of these agencies. Fifty-four percent of the responding agencies provided statistical data, and 87 percent of those that had written policies sent copies.

The third component of the study, conducted by Police Foundation staff in the fall of 1988, involved site visits to provide in-depth examinations of the treatment of child abuse cases in four agencies: the San Francisco Police Department (California), the Montgomery County Police Department (Maryland), the

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Tulsa Police Department (Oklahoma), and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department (Michigan).<sup>21</sup> (For a description of selection criteria and site visit methodologies, see Appendices C and E.)

In discussing the law enforcement practices revealed by our survey and site visits, the present tense is used throughout this report, and refers to the period in 1988 when the data were obtained.

## Study Findings

Law enforcement officials seem eager to improve the way their agencies handle child abuse cases, as evidenced by the high response rate to the telephone survey of large urban law enforcement agencies and the enthusiastic cooperation of all agencies during our site visits. Our study identifies both the benefits and problems in establishing operational internal policies and interagency child abuse programs as well as pointing to some of the strategies police respondents regard as most effective in addressing the problems. The data suggest that most large urban and suburban police agencies have responded in a number of positive ways to the challenges of added child protection responsibilities. Our major findings can be summarized as follows:

- The vast majority of police agencies routinely report abuse and neglect to their local child protective service agencies.
- Over three-quarters of police agencies believe that child protective service agencies inform the police of all cases of sexual abuse brought to their attention; a smaller proportion believe they are being notified of all cases of physical abuse and neglect.<sup>22</sup>
- Police and sheriff's departments conduct a large number of investigations of child abuse and neglect. A rough estimate, based on data from 59 urban agencies, suggests that they are informed of and investigate more than 200,000 cases annually.
- Of those cases that are closed by the police, nearly 40 percent of the sexual abuse cases and about a quarter of physical abuse and neglect cases result in the arrest of a suspected perpetrator. (Additional numbers of cases are investigated but not closed.)
- Nearly two-thirds of the police agencies surveyed have child abuse policies, about half of which recently had been adopted or updated.
- The vast majority of police agencies provide at least some training on identifying child abuse cases to all new recruits, and provide training on the handling of investigations to new child abuse investigators.

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- About half of the police agencies with more than 250 officers have a squad of investigators who have received specialized training and work full time on investigating child abuse cases.
  - In more than three-quarters of the police agencies, a specialized investigator is either on duty or on call 24 hours a day.
  - The presence of a specialized child abuse squad, but not its organizational location, affects case dispositions. For example, agencies having a specialized sexual abuse squad close significantly more sexual abuse cases than do those without such a squad (but with a lower arrest rate).
  - Eighty-one percent of the responding departments have inter-agency agreements regarding child abuse investigations. Fifty percent of agencies have written agreements with at least one other agency; thirty-one percent of agencies have informal agreements.
  - Virtually all interagency agreements involve child protective services and the police; prosecutors and other law enforcement agencies are included in about two-thirds of the agreements; and about one-half involve the medical community. Participation by school, juvenile court, mental health, and private community service agencies is less widespread.
  - Police practices across disparate jurisdictions are similar despite the variations in statutory provisions.

Our findings offer no formula for success that can readily be transferred from one agency to another. Rather, they suggest that police agencies should consider a variety of policies and practices to improve their response to child abuse, including:

- a strong commitment by high-level administrators to improving the agency's response to child abuse;
- a written, agencywide child abuse policy;
- written interagency protocols;
- interagency teams to handle child abuse investigations;
- immediate, telephone notification of the police by protective service agency workers regarding all sexual abuse cases and all cases of serious physical injury or danger;
- initial interviews conducted jointly with child protective agency workers, particularly in sexual abuse cases;

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- patrol officers who are trained in the identification of abuse;
  - specialized investigators, rather than patrol officers, to handle all cases;
  - expertise in child exploitation and pornography investigations within the unit handling child abuse;
  - child abuse specialists, skilled as investigators and comfortable interviewing young children;
  - sexual, ethnic, and language diversity within the unit;
  - child-friendly interview settings;
  - limited and selective use of videotaping and anatomical dolls by properly trained individuals; and
  - victim advocates available throughout the legal process, particularly in sexual abuse cases.

At the same time, our data suggest substantial room for improvement in the responses of both police and other community agencies to child abuse.

- Most respondents report a pressing need for more investigative personnel.
- A third of the police agencies lack written child abuse policies.
- Existing policies often fail to provide sufficient guidance for making important decisions such as when to arrest or when to place a child in protective custody, or they fail to deal with unusual or difficult situations, such as abuse in day-care settings.
- Patrol officers and sheriff's deputies encounter child abuse frequently but sometimes do not recognize it or know how to handle it, suggesting that more training is needed.
- The effectiveness of interagency agreements varies greatly.

## **Future Research**

While shedding some light on current practices, our findings leave many questions unanswered. We found that the police investigate a large number of cases and make arrests in a far larger proportion of cases than suggested by earlier studies, but it remains unclear what proportion of cases are currently referred to the police by child protective agencies, which mechanisms police use to screen cases, and whether they investigate the "right" ones. Also, the effect of such factors as reporting laws, statutory definitions, organizational policies, and caseload demands on case screening and investigation decisions remains unclear.

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It is not known, for example, how quickly police officials learn about and are able to investigate cases, when and how prosecutors decide to prosecute, and if prosecution rates are keeping pace with arrest rates. What happens to the arrestees where no prosecution takes place? In the absence of an arrest, can the involvement of the police deter subsequent abusive behavior? If prosecution rates lag behind, will the police continue to investigate as vigorously and make arrests as frequently?

The current and possible future relationship between child protective and police agencies raise still further questions. What does the increased involvement of the police imply for the division of labor in child abuse investigations? Should the police assume more responsibility for the preliminary investigation of neglect as well as abuse cases, allowing child protective agencies to devote more resources to providing treatment services? Can and should the police assume primary responsibility for identifying the families in need of services? Particularly in neglect cases, how will an increased police role affect police relations with child protective service agencies? Will police involvement make school administrators, health and mental health officials and other agency officials more willing or less willing to report abuse?

Finally, the impact of police investigation, arrest, or subsequent criminal prosecution on child victims, particularly those who are physically abused, must be assessed. Research is also needed on the deterrent effect on the offender of being arrested but not prosecuted, and the effect on the victim of involvement with the criminal justice system. Does police intervention affect the likelihood of the provision of services to the abused child or the family? Our case studies suggest that, contrary to the conventional wisdom which holds that children suffer double victimization by involvement in the criminal justice system, participation in a case may validate the child's story and criminal court involvement may increase the availability of services to victims and their families.

As the police role in handling child abuse grows, so does the need to understand its impact and effectiveness. This report is a first step in this process.

## **Contents of This Report**

This report is intended as a guide to police administrators and others interested in improving police protection of abused and neglected children. We hope it also stimulates further empirical research on the subject of police involvement in child abuse cases. Chapter 2 describes the expanding responsibilities of police agencies. It summarizes the changes in state law that have expanded police responsibilities for child abuse cases, and then presents how these cases are handled. Chapter 3 examines selected practices adopted by police agencies in handling child abuse cases, including the organization of investigative units, written policies, training and the role of technology. Chapter 4 focuses on the



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nature and scope of interagency coordination efforts, the problems in developing and maintaining such agreements, and the ways some agencies have addressed these problems. Finally, based on the project's findings, chapter 5 provides a self-assessment guide for agencies to explore and improve their response to child abuse.

## Endnotes

1. Giovannoni, J. M. and Becerra, R. M., *Defining Child Abuse* (New York: The Free Press, 1979).
2. For historical perspectives on society's reaction to child maltreatment and our changing social and legal definitions of child abuse see Giovannoni and Becerra *ibid.*; Pfohl, S. "The 'discovery' of child abuse," *Social Problems* 24:310-324 (1977); Nelson, B. J., *Making an Issue of Child Abuse: Political Agenda Setting for Social Problems* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
3. American Humane Association, *Highlights of Official Aggregate Child Neglect and Abuse Reporting-1987* (Denver: American Humane Association, 1989).
4. Daro, D. and Mitchel, L., "Child Abuse Fatalities Continue to Rise: The Results of the 1988 Annual 50 State Survey" (Chicago: National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, 1989).
5. Compare U.S. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, *Study Findings: Study of National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect: 1988* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1988), p. 3-11, table 3-5, estimating 1,100, with National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, *Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities: A Review of the Problem and Strategies for Reform* (c. 1988).
6. D. J. Besharov, "'Doing something' about child abuse: The need to narrow the grounds for state intervention." *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 8:540-550 (1985).
7. Attorney General's Task Force, *Final Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1984); D. J. Besharov, *supra* n. 6; and P. Langen and C. A. Innes, *Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1986).
8. P. Rosenthal, "Physical abuse of children by parents: The criminalization decision." *American Journal of Criminal Law* 141:17 (1979).
9. L. Berliner, "Legal intervention in child abuse," pp. 125-147 in D. Bross (ed.) *Multidisciplinary Advocacy for Mistreated Children* (Denver: National Association of Counsel for Children, 1981); H. Giaretto, *Integrated Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse* (Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, 1982).
10. See D. J. Besharov and H. Asamoah, "The Statutory Framework for Police Activities in Cases of Child Abuse" (unpublished report, Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1988). This is one of several documents developed as part of this project that more fully discuss the components of this project. They are available from the authors.
11. American Humane Association, *Highlights of Official Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting* (Denver: American Humane Association, 1988), p. 17; see also L. P. Groeneveld and J. Giovannoni, "Dispositions of child abuse and neglect cases," *Social Work Research and Abstracts*, vol. 13, pp. 24-30 (1977); A. Russel and R. Trainor, *Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Perspective* (Denver: American Humane Association, 1984).
12. C. Willis and R. H. Wells, "The police and child abuse: An analysis of police decisions to report illegal behavior." *Criminology* 26:695-715 (1988).
13. L. M. Williams, "Defining Child Sexual Abuse as Criminal Behavior: The Extent of Police Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Day-Care Settings." (paper presented at annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Montreal, Canada, 1987).

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14. J. Chapman, B. Smith, and N. Brennan, "Child Sexual Abuse: An Analysis of Case Processing" (Final Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice for Grant 84-IJ-CX-0074, 1987).
  15. D. Whitcomb, E. R. Shapiro, and L. Stellwagen, *When the Victim is a Child: Issues for Judges and Prosecutors* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1985).
  16. To address these types of problems, justice system reforms have centered on the court and trial procedures. Legal changes recently adopted in recognition of the special needs of child victims include laws that relax competency requirements, permit various efforts to avoid direct confrontation (but see *Coy v. Iowa*), and allow videotaping of depositions and statements for courtroom use; procedural changes include use of child-sized chairs and the presence of a supportive person during testimony according to Whitcomb et al., *ibid.* As described in the text, videotaping is no longer as popular as it once was.
  17. M. A. Wycoff with M. Kealoha, *Creating the Multidisciplinary Response to Child Sex Abuse: An Implementation Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 1988).
  18. C. S. Widom, "The cycle of violence." *Science* 244:160-165 (1989).
  19. D. J. Besharov and H. Asamoah, *supra* n. 10.
  20. S. E. Martin and E. J. Hamilton, "Police handling of child abuse cases: Policies, procedures and issues." *American Journal of Policing*, Vol. IX, no. 2 (1990).
  21. S. E. Martin, "Case Studies Report: The Handling of Child Abuse in Four Jurisdictions" (unpublished report prepared under subcontract for the American Enterprise Institute. Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 1988).
  22. We interpret this to mean the reporting of all such cases required to be reported to them by law, regulation or interagency agreement.

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## Chapter 2

# Expanding Responsibilities

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This chapter reviews the legislation that has expanded police responsibilities in protecting children from abuse and neglect, examines the implementation of these legal changes, and describes our research findings on case handling.

### Reporting and Notification

Because of their role in the community, police officers are in a unique position to identify cases of child abuse and neglect. According to a study by the American Humane Association, in 1986, 13 percent of all reports to child protective agencies were made by police.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in keeping with the heightened attention to child abuse generally, there has been a substantial improvement in police reporting. The first National Study of the Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect, conducted for the federal government in 1979 and 1980, found that police, coroners and sheriffs did not report 58 percent of the children whose condition suggested maltreatment.<sup>2</sup> By 1986, the second National Incidence Study found that the rate of non-reporting had fallen to 39 percent.<sup>3</sup>

Our analysis of state child abuse laws found a growing trend of assigning the police a greater role in handling cases of child abuse and neglect, especially "serious" ones.<sup>4</sup> Most states have enacted new laws on reporting to the police, reporting by the police, child protective agency notifications to police, and cooperation among agencies. As a result, the police are becoming involved in an increasing number and range of cases.

#### *Reports to Police*

All states have established reporting systems that identify categories of persons who must report suspected abuse or neglect. No jurisdiction requires that all reports of child abuse and neglect be made directly to police agencies. In about 22 states, the "mandatory reporters" have discretion about whether to report to the police or to the child protective agency.<sup>5</sup> In the other states, state law requires that all reports be made to a child protective service agency, subject to recently added exceptions permitting or requiring reports to the police.<sup>6</sup> Such exceptions usually involve serious or fatal injuries, sexual abuse, institutional abuse or neglect, or depiction of a child in sexually explicit material.<sup>7</sup> Other states require a report to the police if the child protective agency cannot be notified of an apparent emergency situation.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, many states also require direct

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reporting to coroners or medical examiners of suspected child abuse and neglect fatalities.<sup>9</sup>

### *Reporting by Police*

All but three or four states statutorily require that police report suspected child abuse and neglect.<sup>10</sup> But to whom? In about half the states, police officers, like other mandatory reporters, must report to a child protective service agency, the sole recipient of such reports.<sup>11</sup> Other jurisdictions allow reporting to either the police or child protection, making police both mandatory reporters and designated recipients of reports.<sup>12</sup> This perplexing legal status of the police could effectively relieve the police of reporting requirements, unless they are required to report to a child protective service agency when they receive a report from another person (as is the case in a number of states).<sup>13</sup> In practice, however, several states require police to relay all reports to child protective agencies, and it furthermore appears that police officers report to such agencies even when not legally required to do so.<sup>14</sup> In fact, 93 percent of the 122 agencies responding to our survey routinely report abuse and neglect to their local child protective service agency.

### *Child Protective Agency Notification to Law Enforcement*

While continuing to require initial reports to child protective service agencies, about half the states have passed laws that require child protective agencies to notify law enforcement officials of certain cases.<sup>15</sup>

About half the states require that child protective service agencies notify police in either all cases, designated types of cases (such as serious physical abuse cases, out-of-home cases, sexual abuse, or child fatalities) or certain situations (such as when criminal prosecution is indicated, the child protective agency suspects a felony might have been committed, or the case involves serious injury or death).

Some states that require child protective agency notification of the police also require notification of the prosecutor. Depending on the law, this may be mandated in all cases, after a child protective agency investigation, on a finding of sufficient evidence of abuse, in cases of physical or sexual abuse, "when necessary," or at the prosecutor's request. Most survey respondents believe that they currently are being notified by child protective agencies of all cases of sexual abuse (77 percent), although fewer respond in a like manner regarding physical abuse (57 percent) or neglect cases (46 percent). Whether they are notified of all or only selected cases depends in large part on whether such notification is required by law. For example, 87 percent of the departments that believe they receive notice of all physical abuse cases said notification is legally required; only 55 percent of agencies that receive partial notification thought

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that notification was required. Thus, the surprisingly high proportions of respondents reporting they now are notified of all cases by child protective agencies may be the result of some respondents interpreting "all cases" to mean all cases that a child protective agency legally is required to report, rather than all cases of which it is aware.

It is also unclear from survey responses what information is received and whether the police get a report immediately or only after the child protective agency completes its investigation. In any case, most survey respondents believe that the police should receive both an immediate phone notification and a subsequent written report from the child protective agency.

Other states that do not require notification of the police require child protective agencies to notify prosecutors. Notification may be required in all cases of abuse, when the child protection agency undertakes an investigation, when criminal prosecution is indicated, in cases involving sexual abuse or exploitation, when the suspected cause of fatality is abuse or neglect, or, again, when requested by the prosecutor.

## Investigations

Most police agencies (62 percent) say that they investigate all cases referred from child protective agencies; only 37 percent screen cases. Contrary to our expectations, agencies receiving all reports are no more likely to screen cases than those notified of only certain cases. We believe that this is so in part because child protective agencies screen preemptively for the police. In any event, most survey respondents would rather receive too many reports (enabling them to screen out cases) than to receive too few and thus miss a case requiring a criminal investigation.

Data from the project's case studies support these survey findings. The four sites (Tulsa, Oklahoma; Washtenaw County, Michigan; San Francisco, California; and Montgomery County, Maryland) have diverse statutory frameworks for reporting and notification. In general, however, the police appear to report intrafamilial cases to child protective agencies routinely. In turn, the agencies provide law enforcement with prompt telephone notification of serious cases.

In San Francisco, for example, while either police or child protective agencies may receive reports, most go to the latter. Within 24 hours, the agency sends the police written copies of all reports involving physical or sexual abuse or serious neglect. Emergency cases are referred by telephone. Once the police department's juvenile division receives the report, child abuse computer files are accessed, and any prior abuse reports are noted. A sergeant in the unit is responsible for reviewing all reports, selecting those that require further investigation, and assigning them to investigators.

This crude measure probably overestimates the number of police investigations, given recent estimates of reports received by child protective agencies<sup>16</sup> and the probability that large urban departments, with specialized investigators, will be notified of cases more frequently than will small rural agencies. A more conservative measure, based only on the 242,183 officers in agencies serving populations over 100,000, suggests that in 1987, police in these jurisdictions conducted 197,621 child abuse investigations.

Table 2-1 shows the distribution of different types of investigations by agency size. Agencies have been divided into three groups: those with fewer than 250 officers, those between 250 and 600, and those over 600. Regardless of agency size, most investigations involve sexual abuse, about a third involve physical abuse, and only about 10 percent involve neglect. In many agencies, the child protective agency only refers the most serious cases of physical abuse and neglect to law enforcement. The predominance of sexual abuse is not surprising since it has become the focus of greatest attention, causes stronger moral outrage among the public, and is more clearly defined in the criminal law than physical abuse and neglect. There is also a feeling that, even more than for the perpetrators of physical abuse, criminal prosecution is appropriate for persons who sexually abuse children.

**Table 2-1**  
**Distribution of Child Abuse Cases**  
**by Number of Officers in Agency**

Percent of Cases in Category of Child Abuse	Number of Officers in Agency		
	<250 (N=26)	250-600 (N=16)	>600 (N=17)
Physical Abuse	35	28	36
Neglect	9	11	13
Sexual Abuse (including sexual offenses and exploitation)	56	61	51
Total Cases	100%	100%	100%

Table 2-2 shows the percentage of each type of closure by category of maltreatment.<sup>17</sup> For each category, the total number of closed cases reported was summed across agencies and then divided by the total number of closures of each type of disposition. As a result, since large departments handle more cases than small ones, those with over 600 officers have a substantial impact on the distribution of dispositions.

**Table 2-2**  
**Percentage of Dispositions of**  
**Closed Cases by Type of Abuse**

Type of Disposition	Type of Abuse		
	Phys. Abuse* (N=7,382)	Neglect* (N=1,810)	Sexual Abuse* (N=9,188)
Unfounded	19	24	19
Exceptional	58	55	42
Arrest	23	21	39
Total Dispositions	100 %	100 %	100 %

\* Data provided by 44 agencies; mean number of cases = 168; median number of cases = 57; standard deviation = 287.

\* Data provided by 33 agencies; mean number of cases = 51; median number of cases = 22; standard deviation = 78.

+ Data provided by 52 agencies; mean number of cases = 175; median number of cases = 110; standard deviation = 229.

As the table shows, most physical abuse and neglect cases investigated by the police are closed “exceptionally” (i.e., without an arrest, even though the allegation is found to have merit), for such reasons as insufficient evidence or the victim’s reluctance to pursue prosecution. About 40 percent of the sexual abuse cases and about a quarter of both physical abuse and neglect cases result in an arrest. The larger than anticipated percentage of arrests in sexual abuse cases is due to such reasons as publicity over and concern with sexual abuse, the more uniform gravity of cases, the fact that they are serious felonies under the criminal code, and increased prosecutorial involvement in such cases.<sup>18</sup>

To better understand why some cases result in arrest and others do not, and why the proportions of child abuse cases vary widely among departments, we examined some of the organizational factors which might explain such differences. As Table 2-3 shows, neither the size of the department nor the organizational location of child abuse specialists affect the percentages of either physical or sexual abuse cases resulting in an arrest. A significantly higher proportion of arrests for physical abuse (33 percent) occur in municipal departments as opposed to county agencies (21 percent). However, equal proportions of sex abuse cases result in arrest. Similarly, the west significantly has more physical abuse—but not sexual abuse—cases resulting in arrests than other regions. (This is probably a reflection of the high proportion of cases from California.) The same is true for departments without written child abuse policies, as opposed to those with them.

**Table 2-3**

**Organizational Factors Associated with Arrests in Abuse Cases**

Organizational Factors	Percent of Cases Resulting in Arrest	
	Sexual Abuse (N=42)	Physical Abuse (N=46)
<b>Size</b>		
<250 Officers	50% (23)*	29% (27)
250-600	45 (14)	33 (27)
>600	39 (18)	22 (08)
	F=1.63; NS	F=.77; NS
<b>Type of Department</b>		
Municipal	46 (17)	33 (20)
County	45 (23)	21 (20)
	F=.01; NS	F=3.73; p<.06
<b>Region</b>		
Northeast	55 (15)	33 (25)
North Central	43 (25)	22 (21)
South	45 (21)	23 (12)
West	42 (16)	42 (27)
	F=.57; NS	F=2.84; p<.05
<b>Written Child Abuse Policy</b>		
Yes	43 (22)	25 (17)
No	51 (18)	36 (26)
	F=1.98; NS	F=2.96; p<.09
<b>Specialized Sex/Physical Abuse Squad</b>		
Yes	40 (18)	28 (19)
No	50 (20)	28 (23)
	F=3.41; p<.07	F=.25; NS
<b>Organizational Location</b>		
Squad in CID	48 (22)	29 (21)
Squad in Youth/Juvenile	39 (14)	29 (22)
None/Other	49 (22)	18 (03)
	F=1.27; NS	F=.25; NS

\* Standard deviations in parentheses.

NS = not significant



Significantly fewer sex abuse cases are closed with an arrest (40 percent) in agencies with a specialized sex abuse squad than in those with either no squad or a single squad handling all abuse cases (50 percent). The best explanation of this last difference is that investigators in specialized squads work more closely with the prosecutor and the child protective workers than do other investigators. The former may make arrests only when the prosecutor has agreed to file charges and the child protective agency has not found an alternative disposition. Without data on charging, however, this explanation remains speculative. Moreover, the presence of a specialized physical abuse squad was not associated with the proportion of arrests in physical abuse cases.

Table 2-4 examines investigation and arrest patterns in the three case study agencies for which data were available. It, too, suggests substantial variation in the types of cases investigated and in the proportions that result in an arrest. For example, in Washtenaw and Montgomery Counties, over half of all police investigations of child abuse involve sexual abuse; in Tulsa, such cases make up only 38 percent of the investigations. Physical abuse investigations also vary widely, from zero to 16 percent. Yet, in each jurisdiction, most or all child abuse arrests are for sexual abuse or sex offenses against children. In none does an arrest result from a neglect investigation.

**Table 2-4**

**Distribution of Child Abuse Investigations and Arrests  
for Three Police Agencies by Category of Abuse**

	Tulsa P.D.			Washtenaw Co. S.D.			Montgomery Co. P.D.		
	Inv*	Arr	%Arr	Inv+	Arr	%Arr	Inv+	Arr	%Arr
Physical Abuse	327	52	16	30	0	0	205	13	6
Sexual Abuse	302	87	29	66	56	85	316	108	34
Neglect	175	0	0	24	0	0	16	0	0
Total	804	139	17%	120	56	47%	537	121	23%

\* Total investigations by all officers in department; unit investigation totals unavailable in Tulsa. Arrest data departmentwide.

+ Closed investigations conducted by investigators assigned to child abuse unit only. Arrest data based on child abuse unit arrests.

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## Endnotes

1. American Humane Association, *Highlights of Official Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting* (Denver: American Humane Association, 1988).
2. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, *National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1981), p. 34 (Table 6-2).
3. U.S. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, *Study Findings: Study of National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect: 1988* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1988), p. 6-12 (Table 6-4).
4. D. J. Besharov and H. Asamoah, "The Statutory Framework for Police Activities in Cases of Child Abuse" (unpublished report, Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1988). Available from the authors.
5. *Ibid.*, at pp. 6-7.
6. *Id.*, at p. 7.
7. *Id.*, at pp. 7-8.
8. *Id.*, at p. 7.
9. *Id.*, at p. 9.
10. *Id.*, at p. 10.
11. *Id.*, at p. 11.
12. *Id.*, at p. 12.
13. *Id.*, at p. 13.
14. *National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect*, *supra* n. 2, at pp. 13-15 (Tables 3-2 and 3-4).
15. Douglas J. Besharov and Harvetta Asamoah, *supra* n. 4, at Table 3.
16. A. Russel and R. Trainor, *Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Perspective* (Denver: American Humane Association, 1984).
17. Because many departments reported that they investigated more cases than they closed, it would be inappropriate to extrapolate a number of child abuse arrests on the basis of estimates of investigations rather than case closures.
18. In comparison with rates of arrest for forcible rape and for aggravated assault, these rates are low. See Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime In the United States-1988* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989) that reported, for 1988, arrest rates of 52 percent for forcible rapes known to the police and 57 percent for aggravated assault. Arrest rates for simple assaults and offenses against family members and children, however, are not available.

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## Chapter 3

# Current Police Practices

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To respond more effectively to child abuse, police agencies have adopted a variety of internal policies and procedures and, with increasing frequency, have entered into agreements with other agencies. This chapter examines internal police practices and identifies those which appear most promising. The next chapter examines interagency coordination.

### Specialization in Initial Investigations

Survey respondents were asked who receives incoming reports of child abuse, whether these reports are followed up by specialists in child abuse investigations, and, if so, to specify the responsibilities and organizational location of these specialists.

In 56 percent of the agencies, responsibility for investigations of sexual abuse rests with specialized individuals or squads in the criminal investigation unit; in 36 percent, with specialists in the juvenile or youth unit (often located organizationally within the criminal investigation unit). In the remaining 8 percent of the agencies, there is either no specialist or one is located in another unit (see Table 3-1). Physical abuse investigations are slightly less likely to be the responsibility of criminal investigation unit investigators (51 percent) and slightly more likely to be handled by a juvenile specialist (43 percent) than sexual abuse cases.

When a dispatcher receives a call alleging child abuse, 78 percent of the responding agencies send a patrol unit to conduct the preliminary investigation; 14 percent of the agencies refer even initial dispatches to the specialized unit. In the remaining 8 percent, the response depends on the time of day the call is received. Certain types of calls are less likely to be handled by a patrol unit. If a hospital worker calls at 6:00 p.m. to report suspected abuse, only 62 percent of the agencies would dispatch a patrol officer in response. The other agencies would have an investigator (though not necessarily a child abuse specialist) respond.

Most jurisdictions in our sample have an investigator (again, not necessarily a specialist in child abuse) available to handle emergency cases of abuse at night and on weekends. Typically, the investigator is on call (49 percent). In a third of the agencies the investigator is on duty until midnight—significantly more often in large departments (46 percent) than in medium sized ones (37 percent) or smaller ones (18 percent).<sup>1</sup>

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**Table 3-1**

**Organizational Unit Responsible for  
Child Abuse Investigations by Type of Investigation**

<b>Organizational Unit in %</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse (N=122)</b>	<b>Physical Abuse (N=122)</b>
Criminal Investigation	56	51
Youth or Juvenile	36	43
Other (incl. no specialist)	8	6
Total	100%	100%

Agency size is significantly associated with the degree of specialization in both sexual and physical abuse cases. Smaller agencies are less likely to have specialized investigators or squads than the larger ones, as shown in Table 3-2. Of all departments with fewer than 250 officers, about one quarter have only one specialist to handle abuse and neglect cases, another 25 percent assign a specialized squad to handle both physical and sexual abuse of children, and the rest make abuse cases the responsibility of an investigative unit with a broader assignment. Medium and large agencies are more likely to have specialized squads devoted to investigation of physical and sexual abuse cases. In most of these agencies investigators handle both types of cases, but in about one quarter, entire squads concentrate exclusively on either sexual abuse or physical abuse cases.

In many of the agencies, child abuse investigators also handle cases of non-familial child abuse, including sexual exploitation and pornography. While these cases often require proactive tactics and extensive personnel, they do not involve child protective agencies.<sup>2</sup> Only 29 percent of the agencies responding to the survey assign an individual officer or a separate squad to such cases. As might be expected, agencies with more than 250 officers are more likely than smaller ones to have an individual specialist or specialized squad devoted to handling exploitation cases (33 versus 22 percent respectively). In Tulsa, a single investigator assigned to an intelligence unit handles exploitation cases; in Washtenaw County, the child abuse specialist has become involved in an interagency pornography investigation task force; in Montgomery County and San Francisco, several of the most experienced investigators (within the youth and juvenile divisions respectively) do proactive pedophile investigations. While these investigations require more resources than do intrafamilial investigations, the departments allocate greater resources to such cases because there are often multiple victims, and because they lead to arrests that are more likely to be followed by prosecution, convictions, and long prison sentences.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 3-2**

**Degree of Specialization in Child Abuse Investigative Responsibilities  
by Size of Law Enforcement Agency**

**A. Sexual Abuse Cases**

Degree of Specialization	Agency Size		
	<250 (N=47)	250-600 (N=35)	>600 (N=40)
One specialist	23	14	—
Specialist in investigative unit with broader duties	40	26	33
Squad dedicated to both physical and sexual abuse	26	51	45
Specialized sexual abuse squad	—	6	13
Other (incl. no specialist)	11	3	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %*</b>

$\chi^2 = 21.90$ ;  $p < .01$  \*Sum does not equal 100 percent due to rounding

**B. Physical Abuse Cases**

Degree of Specialization	Agency Size		
	<250 (N=47)	250-600 (N=35)	>600 (N=40)
One specialist	23	14	—
Specialist in investigative unit with broader duties	43	26	28
Squad devoted to both physical and sexual abuse	26	54	43
Specialized physical abuse squad	—	6	22
Other (incl. no specialist)	9	—	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %*</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %*</b>

$\chi^2 = 31.26$ ;  $p < .0001$  \*Sum does not equal 100 percent due to rounding

If an agency lacks the resources to assign at least one investigator to handle child abuse investigations, it may enter into an agreement with a larger agency such as the state police or sheriff's department (as in Washtenaw County). Alternatively, the county prosecutor may employ one or more special investigators to whom all child abuse cases are referred for investigation (as is done in DuPage County, Illinois, and Atlantic County, New Jersey). Similarly, agencies with limited resources sometimes find it desirable to have at least one investigator with expertise in the newly-emerging area of sexual exploitation of children. This

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officer conducts proactive investigations and briefs other investigators on the identification and handling of such cases.

The mission of many police juvenile units has shifted in the past decade from working with juvenile delinquents to protecting child victims, as M. Klein observed and our site visits support.<sup>4</sup> This change has led to both an elevation in the status of juvenile units and a redefinition of the role of the juvenile specialist. As the status of juvenile units has risen, so too have internal morale and the competition to gain assignment to them.

The degree of specialization varies across agencies. In Tulsa, separate investigators handle sexual abuse and physical abuse cases; the sex offense investigators handle sex crimes against adults and children alike. Before a reorganization in November 1988, Montgomery County similarly had specialized squads for sexual abuse and other cases. Although separate staffs heighten the level of specialization, Montgomery County prefers to assign both physical and sexual abuse cases to unit investigators, and most agencies appear to do likewise. This practice yields a more varied caseload and gives supervisors greater flexibility in allocating work. In Washtenaw County, the child abuse investigator, at her request, is included by the homicide detective in any investigation of the death of a child due to suspected abuse or neglect. By contrast, police investigators in Montgomery County and San Francisco noted that they have faced turf-related skirmishes with sex crime units over responsibility for investigating non-familial sex offenses against juveniles.

The hours that an investigator is on duty or on call present another organizational issue for specialized units. In two of the case-study agencies, investigators are on duty during the evening shift throughout the week; in the others, they are on call at those times. Difficulties in coordinating with child protective service workers and dividing the work equitably among the squads have caused problems with evening shift assignments in both on-duty sites. But if specialists rather than patrol officers are to conduct preliminary child abuse investigations, evening and weekend coverage is essential.

Small agencies are generally unable to maintain an investigator on duty (rather than on call). But larger agencies should examine when new cases of each type come in, and weigh the logistical problems and costs of overtime assignments for on-call investigators against those stemming from an evening on-duty shift.<sup>5</sup> Based on these data they should decide on the best form of evening and weekend coverage to assure that an investigator is available.

The stress of child abuse investigations can lead to investigator burnout. Agencies seek to reduce investigator stress in several ways, including: (1) varied case assignments; (2) encouragement of and support for informal group "venting"; (3) having the department psychologist occasionally "drop in" and be available at other times; (4) encouraging and reimbursing investigators' participation in

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professional meetings; and (5) provision of training opportunities which both increase investigative skills and provide a break from the daily routine. Investigators at case-study sites suggested that burnout might be reduced further through such measures as adding more personnel, less frequent on-call responsibilities; recognition by supervisors that child abuse investigations are more time consuming and emotionally demanding than other investigations; recognition for the expertise of investigators, either through salary bonuses or departmental awards; or the use of a victim-witness coordinator to handle the frequent phone calls from victims' parents seeking both information and reassurance.

The ability of the investigator appears to have more of an impact on investigations and their outcomes than does the administrative location of child abuse specialists. Child abuse units may be effective in either criminal investigation divisions or juvenile units—so long as the investigators are carefully selected, well trained, and the nature of their caseload considered by supervisors. Successful child abuse investigators require skills in dealing with children (previously found principally in juvenile specialists) and in conducting difficult investigations (found in criminal investigators).

While individual ability is the most important element in a successful child abuse investigator, investigative units which are representative of the victims they serve also improve performance. Some victims of sexual abuse feel more comfortable discussing what happened to them with persons of the same sex or same race. Decision making, which often involves a subtle weighing of cultural and community factors, is also enhanced by better sexual and ethnic diversity in the child abuse unit. In all four case-study agencies, ethnic and racial minority group investigators are underrepresented. The presence of an investigator speaking the victim's same language is most important. Without imposing actual quotas, departments should attempt to increase the range of languages spoken by juvenile investigators. In the San Francisco department, for example, a Cantonese-speaking female officer had been detailed to the juvenile division.

## **The Role of Patrol**

The special nature of child abuse cases and the needs of child victims can make the availability of a trained investigator particularly important. In three of the case-study sites (Tulsa is the exception), the involvement of patrol in preliminary investigations has been curtailed, with salutary effects. Once patrol officers identify a probable instance of abuse, they contact a child abuse specialist who conducts the investigation and completes all reports. This arrangement has produced fewer victim interviews and stronger cases. Also, the frequency of contacts among a few persons in each agency has fostered closer cooperation and the development of trusting relationships between police and child protective agency personnel.

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In San Francisco and Montgomery County, patrol officers have readily complied with procedures for turning cases over to investigators once they recognize them. Their ability to recognize the abuse to which they are exposed is, however, less clear.

Although it may be desirable to permit specialists to handle cases from their inception, patrol officers remain mandatory reporters and are often the first representatives of a public agency to become aware of a case. As such, they continue to play an important role in identifying suspected abuse victims and taking them into protective custody. Therefore, they need to be trained both to understand their reporting responsibilities and to look for evidence of possible abuse or neglect, particularly when handling family disturbance calls. For example, policy directives relating to spouse abuse should give the responding officer responsibility for assessing the safety of the children in the home.

## Written Policies

Written policies that provide real guidance to officers increase departmental capabilities. Sixty-three percent of the 122 agencies responding to our survey reported that they had written policies, and 87 percent of the 77 with policies provided us with copies. Judging from the wide variety of materials we received, however, departments often use the term "policy" loosely.

In addition to departmental standard operating procedures (SOPs) on child abuse, materials received under the "policy" rubric included training bulletins, investigator manuals, departmental SOPs on handling juveniles and on sexual assault investigations, information bulletins and legal updates, and SOPs related to interagency agreements and the organization and mission of a specialized unit. Deciding which documents qualified as policy, therefore, was not a simple task.

We treated as policy those documents titled "general order," "standard operating procedure," "guideline," and "investigator's manual," as well as interagency memoranda updating or explicitly stating a new child abuse procedure. We excluded legal bulletins and training manuals (although they frequently contained useful material on how to identify abuse cases).

In coding the contents of these "policies," it was relatively simple to determine whether a procedure existed. It was more difficult to decide whether the material was specific enough to be an actual statement of policy, defined as providing guidelines for making crucial decisions. Arrest policies, for instance, had to provide the officer with one or more specific guidelines or examples of "probable cause." Similarly, policies on protective custody had to specify a set of factors that the officer should weigh in decision making.

About half the policies were quite new or recently revised when the survey was conducted in 1988. Of 63 policies that had a date of issue, 49 percent had been



promulgated or revised in 1987 or 1988; 27 percent had been issued or revised in 1985 or 1986; only 24 percent were dated in 1984 or earlier. We view this as a positive finding. Child abuse policies should be reviewed and revised regularly, preferably every two years, to keep pace with the frequent changes in internal procedures and the law.

Table 3-3 shows the frequency of policy elements. (Differences based on agency type, size, and region were minimal and therefore are not shown). The most common elements are those reflecting the legally mandated aspects of law enforcement responsibilities: notifying the child protective agency (included in 75 percent of the policies); conducting an initial investigation (64 percent); collecting evidence (63 percent); and determining whether to take a child into protective custody (49 percent). Other elements such as guidelines for identifying cases, interviewing parties, and conducting joint investigations with a child protective agency are found less frequently in agency policies.

**Table 3-3**  
**Contents of Written Child Abuse Policies**

	<b>Extent of Procedures and Guidelines in Percent (N=67)</b>
Notification of child protective agency	75%
Conducting initial investigation	64
Evidence collection	63
Follow-up investigations	49
When to take a child into protective custody	49
Obtaining medical diagnosis or treatment for victim	46
Handling protective custody (e.g., notifying parents, transporting child)	40
Statement of law enforcement responsibilities in joint investigation	37
Identifying cases of physical abuse	36
Specifying which cases to investigate jointly with child protection	34
Identifying cases of sexual abuse	30
Identifying neglect	30
Interviewing abuse victims	29
Resolving protective custody disagreements between law enforcement and child protection investigators	27
When to arrest	16
Interviewing alleged abuser	14
Looking for child abuse in spouse abuse cases	13

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Many of the policies have clear, admirable, and innovative elements. But since none cover all of the elements we believe to be essential, we could not identify one as a model or exemplary policy. Such a policy would include a clear statement of the policy's goal and the department's role in establishing it; definitions of such terms as abuse, neglect, child, and sexual exploitation, referenced to the relevant statutory definitions; and explicit procedures that cover the responsibilities of all personnel for reporting suspected cases, as well as the specific responsibilities of dispatchers, patrol officers, and investigators. In addition, it would contain clear guidance on how to handle initial contacts with victims or complainants, how to conduct interviews, how and when to notify other agencies, how to collect evidence, how to decide whether to take a child into protective custody or to arrest a suspected abuser, and how to complete necessary reports. Because policies are often part of a larger procedures manual, it is likely that some of these absent elements are covered elsewhere. If so, the policy should cross-reference the existing procedure or guideline. Appendices A and B include policies which illustrate the different approaches to articulating these elements.

The policies of the Montgomery County and San Francisco Police Departments and their interagency agreements are noteworthy because they set forth procedures for the investigation of out-of-home abuse, particularly cases with allegations of multiple victims. (Procedures for such cases are set forth in the interagency agreements included in Appendices A and B.) As the number of day-care center and other institutional cases grows,<sup>6</sup> it becomes increasingly important that they be handled in ways that both protect the well-being of the accused and avoid the confusion that surrounded the first such cases to come to public attention. Clearly defined procedures are a necessary first step.

Agencies without any written policies on child abuse should adopt them. Those with policies that are over two years old should review them.

## **Training**

Well-trained officers and investigators are essential to an effective police response to child abuse. Although we could not assess the quality of the training, the survey responses indicate that the vast majority of agencies (93 percent) provide their rookies with at least some pre-service training in identifying child abuse. In Tulsa, for example, supervisors from the department's domestic crimes unit and the county's child protective services teach a four-hour unit on child abuse. Rookies are also taken to various community agencies, including the protective services shelter, and are obligated to do several hours of community service work. This is reported to have a positive effect, both on the officers who become familiar with social service agencies, and on agency relations with the police.

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However, patrol officers—whether rookies or veterans—need more interdisciplinary training. To this end, Montgomery County has developed a series of 15-minute training videos—presented during roll calls—on such issues as identifying physical abuse and techniques for interviewing young children.

In most departments (79 percent), child abuse specialists receive some training when they are initially assigned to their new investigative responsibilities (although only 37 percent receive 40 hours or more). Likewise, specialists in 77 percent of the responding agencies received additional training in 1987 (45 percent received more than 40 hours). Survey respondents and investigators in the case-study agencies generally agreed that—for specialists—there are now ample seminars and workshops available through federal and state organizations and private contractors. But obtaining funds to pay registration and travel expenses for all the investigators who should attend remains a problem.

For specialists, training in interrogation techniques may have a particular payoff: increased rates of confession from suspects, thereby forcing fewer victims to testify. In the case-study agencies, cross-agency training has had a very positive effect, both by increasing police officers' knowledge and in broadening their understanding of their counterparts in child protective service and health care agencies. Such training should be an integral part of the implementation of any interagency cooperative agreement. Indeed, the agreement should provide for an annual in-service training program as part of the ongoing activities of the cooperating agencies.

## **Interview Techniques**

To meet the special needs of child victims, most experts have recommended "child-friendly" interview rooms to put young victims at ease, anatomical dolls and drawings for diagnostic purposes, and videotaping of statements to reduce the trauma of repeated interviews. Our survey indicates that many large police agencies have such facilities and procedures: 52 percent have or have access to a child-friendly interview room, 85 percent use anatomical dolls, and 45 percent videotape all or some victim interviews.

Both the survey and the site visits reveal substantial disenchantment with dolls and videotaping. According to our respondents, videotaping interviews of victims has not only proven to be of limited utility in reducing the number of interviews to which a child is subjected, but, in fact, has also created new problems. These include undermining court cases, inhibiting children from speaking freely, and, for some victims of child pornography, even repeating the victimization process.

Investigators have found that children disclose their abuse gradually, and that this often requires a series of interviews. When all interviews are taped, the later ones may seem to contradict the earlier ones. If these seemingly contradictory

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statements are juxtaposed, they may be used to attack the victim's credibility. On the other hand, when only the last interview is taped, the defense may claim that the prosecutor waited until the child's statement was well-rehearsed before taping it.

Despite such complications, respondents evidenced substantial sentiment for videotaping victim interviews on a *selective* basis. Respondents emphasized the value of videotaping as a training tool, as a way to get perpetrators to confess, and as a mechanism for informing other investigators and agencies who could not be present at the interview.

There is also agreement that the use of anatomical dolls should be limited to very young children. Moreover, only trained investigators should use the dolls, since a number of cases have been lost due to leading questions and incorrect interpretation. Several child abuse experts also suggest that with non-verbal children, drawing pictures has two advantages over demonstrating with dolls: pictures are more impressive to a jury than a police report, and less subject to challenge in the court. Nevertheless, as with the use of anatomical dolls, interpreting drawings also requires substantial expertise.

Interviews may traumatize victims not only by their frequency, but also by such factors as the length of the interview, the conditions under which it occurs, the number of people involved, and the lack of skills of particular interviewers. It may be more traumatic for a child to be confronted by many people in a single interview room than to undergo a series of sensitively conducted, private interviews. Thus, interviews with victims of sexual abuse in which the child protective worker, police investigator, and hospital doctor or intake nurse all are present require careful planning and execution.

## **Victim/Witness Coordinators**

Investigators at all the case-study sites agreed on the importance of meeting the informational and psychological needs of both victims and their non-abusing parents. In Montgomery County and Tulsa, police and prosecutors alike commended the invaluable contribution of their victim/witness coordinators who provide information and psychological support to children and parents. (Obtaining such a coordinator is a high priority goal in Washtenaw County.)

In Montgomery County, the coordinator works for the police department. Her position was created as part of a three-year state grant to expand the duties of the exploitation and pornography squad to include work with the victims and their families. The coordinator has been so successful that investigators handling intrafamilial sexual abuse have also referred many victims to her. Because the coordinator is part of the police unit, all victims and their families have access to her assistance from the outset of the investigation, regardless of whether their case is prosecuted. While it may not be feasible for small departments to employ

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a victim/witness coordinator, a countywide office might appoint a coordinator to better meet the service needs of victims at an early stage of case processing.

## Endnotes

1. The availability of an investigator between midnight and 8 a.m. and on weekends differs little by agency size. For example, only 15 percent of the large agencies and 11 and 7 percent of the medium and small ones had investigators on-duty at night. On the other hand, 59, 69, and 68 percent, respectively, had investigators on call.
2. The law in most states requires reports and child protective agencies investigations only in cases in which the alleged abuser is a parent or other designated caretaker. Minnesota, for example, requires police notification if the abuse is committed by "a person responsible for the child's care outside the family unit," which may include a parent's live-in paramour or a day-care worker. [Minn. Stat. Ann. s. 626.556 (10) (10a) (Supp. 1985).] The rationale for this is that "child protective service agencies are family oriented. Therefore, although the abuse and neglect of children in public and private institutions is intolerable, its investigation is beyond the functions best performed by child protective service workers." *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Investigation: Policy Guidelines for Decision Making* (Chicago: American Bar Association, 1988), pp. 3-4.
3. The term sexual exploitation is used to describe the sexual victimization of children involving child pornography, child sex rings, and child prostitution. Pedophiles, or persons who are sexually attracted to children, tend to have predictable and repetitive behavior patterns. While some of these cases involve parental exploitation of their own children, most involve offenders who cultivate acquaintances with vulnerable children for their sexual gratification. One study of 571 sex offenders against children found that offenders older than 18 years of age had an average of 380 victims. See G. G. Abel, *The Evaluation of Child Molesters: Final Report to the Center on Antisocial and Violent Behavior* (Rockville, MD: National Institute of Mental Health, 1985). For additional information see K. Lanning, *Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1987) and A.W. Burgess, (ed.) *Child Pornography and Sex Rings* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984).
4. M. Klein, "Juvenile Policing: Orientations, Issues and Suggested Programs for OJJDP" (unpublished paper, Los Angeles: Social Science Research Institute of USC, 1986).
5. Most abuse cases come in during the daytime hours, particularly those reported by schools and physicians. Medical emergency cases requiring immediate attention often come in the evening, but are fewer in number.
6. A recent study designed to identify all cases of sexual abuse in day care reported nationwide from 1983 through 1985, identified 270 facilities where substantiated abuse had occurred involving a total of 1,639 children. On the basis of their data the authors estimate that the risk to children is 5.5 children sexually abused per 10,000 enrolled. This figure is lower than the risk of sexual abuse in the home. See D. Finkelhor and L. Williams with N. Burns, *Nursery Crimes: Sexual Abuse in Day Care* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1988). Other "macro" cases involve children placed in institutional settings.

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## Chapter 4

# Interagency Coordination

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Child abuse and child neglect are community problems requiring a cooperative response. Though they play different roles, law enforcement, child protective, and other local agencies must share the same basic goal: the protection of endangered children. Law enforcement can protect children through the arrest and criminal prosecution of offenders, while child protective agencies seek to protect children through the provision of services or the removal of children from the home. The approaches of different agencies should be complimentary, not incompatible. Depending on the situation, either agency may benefit from the assistance of the other. Hence, their efforts must be harmonized to meet their common responsibilities towards children.

### Extent and Scope

Developing and sustaining an interagency approach to child abuse presents an enormous challenge. The issues to be addressed are complex, and law enforcement and social service agencies have different philosophies regarding the problem.<sup>1</sup> Yet an integrated approach is essential to the development of an effective response to child abuse. Consequently, a growing number of departments have adopted interagency agreements and created multidisciplinary teams of specialists to handle cases.

Police assistance may be needed even when the responsibility for conducting the investigation lies with child protective service. At night or on weekends, child protective workers may not be available. When a parent is unwilling to cooperate with the worker or becomes belligerent or physically threatening, police authority may be needed to protect the child or the worker or otherwise maintain order. Although child protective agencies can, and often do, seek police assistance without a specific legislative mandate, four states require the police to assist child protective workers when they take a child into protective custody, and other states have specific provisions that require police assistance in other situations.

Almost all states specifically grant police officers authority to take children into temporary protective custody without prior court approval, when they are in "immediate danger."<sup>2</sup> In about half the states, child protective agencies also have this power.<sup>2</sup> As a practical matter, however, child protective workers rarely attempt to forcibly remove a child without police assistance.

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About half the states have legislation that expressly calls for cooperation and coordination among police and child protection agencies. Several states have laws which require the promulgation of rules or regulations for cooperation between agencies or the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams or task forces on child abuse and neglect.

Shared legal responsibility for investigating child abuse cases has led to a growing number of formal, interagency cooperative agreements, sometimes in response to a legislative mandate. Among the 122 agencies responding to our survey, 51 percent have written agreements with at least one other agency, 34 percent have informal but routinized interagency agreements, and only 16 percent have neither. Virtually all interagency agreements involve child protective services and the police. About two-thirds include prosecutors and other law enforcement agencies, and about half involve health providers. School, juvenile court, mental health, and private community service agencies participate less often.

Most agreements (84 percent) cover both sexual and physical abuse cases; 16 percent cover only sexual abuse cases. Differences between informal and written agreements with respect to participating agencies and scope are slight. The great majority of interagency agreements, whether written or informal, include three elements:

- (1) guidelines for notifying other agencies about reports of abuse;
- (2) specification of when to conduct joint investigations; and
- (3) definition of each agency's responsibility in working cooperatively on such cases.

Many also provide procedures for involving the prosecutor in the investigation (70 percent), describe where to refer a child for medical treatment (59 percent), and specify when there are to be routine interagency meetings (56 percent).

Most respondents (93 percent) regard their interagency cooperative arrangements as either effective or satisfactory. They reported that procedures for immediate notification have greatly increased the ability of the police to respond to child abuse cases in a timely fashion. At the same time, they identified a number of problems that hamper the effectiveness of interagency coordination, including shortages of both child protective and police investigators, which make it difficult to arrange joint interviews; differences among participants regarding their roles and philosophical approaches, leading to discrepancies in definitions of a "serious" case and the proper way to handle it; and a lack of communication among the various participants.

The expansion of responsibilities shared by law enforcement and social service workers increases the importance of interagency coordination for each. The

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benefits of such cooperation include broadened perspectives for workers in each agency and a division of labor enabling the police to do a larger share of the investigations, which, in turn, frees more child protection resources for providing services. Although the presence of the police may deter subsequent abuse in the short term, victims and their families still need supportive services largely available only from social service agencies.

Efforts to improve coordination may cause tension and interagency conflict if a model inappropriate to both local circumstances and available resources is imposed. Such a situation is illustrated by an effort in one county to establish a single-site children's center. The child protective agency in that county took the initiative in developing plans to establish a center patterned on Huntsville's Children's Advocacy Center<sup>3</sup> but ran into several problems. In Huntsville, the politically powerful district attorney had taken the lead. In the replicating county, this task fell to a mid-level child protection supervisor with limited authority even within the Department of Social Services. Because of inadequate planning for implementation, staff from two other agencies were assigned to work in the child protective agency, without having their roles defined or lines of authority established. The ensuing interagency friction was so acute that an ad hoc review committee had to restructure the organization before it could become operational.

This experience suggests the need to carefully plan for changes at all administrative levels. It also indicates that jurisdictions must exercise caution in imposing a model developed elsewhere that may not be appropriate. There is no single best model or approach. Each jurisdiction must tailor its cooperative arrangement to the local realities, which agency representatives must identify as they seek to achieve the common goal of protecting children.

Developing, implementing, and sustaining an interagency agreement demands great effort and necessitates compromise on the part of all participating agencies. Yet the benefits for participants and, most importantly, for victims of child abuse make it worth the effort.

## **Developing Cooperative Agreements**

An interagency agreement may specify any or all of the following: the types of cases and mechanisms for interagency notification; the cases and situations requiring that law enforcement and child protective agencies conduct joint interviews; periodic meetings to review problem cases; mechanisms for meeting to discuss mutual problems or modify the agreement; routine or occasional joint training sessions; provisions for handling unusual, extensive or complex (macro) cases; the establishment of a single central site; and the role and responsibilities of a paid coordinator.



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Improved interagency coordination requires that the police redefine their roles, revise their policies, alter organizational habits, change attitudes, and overcome suspicions about other agencies and their personnel. Although often difficult to achieve, once accomplished, participants generally recognize that the benefits of these changes far outweigh their costs, and they then support the new status quo. For example, the involvement of police specialists in safety and child abuse prevention programs in the schools strengthens their linkages with other community agencies and thereby enhances the effectiveness of the police. Sixty-seven percent of the survey agencies routinely involve police in personal safety or child abuse prevention programs in the schools (although often they are not conducted by child abuse specialists).

### *Administrative Leadership and Organizational Support*

Interagency agreements have diverse origins. In San Francisco, practitioners from the medical, mental health, and social service communities began developing cooperative arrangements several years before law enforcement agencies became involved. In Washtenaw County, the written protocols stemmed from a sheriff's department initiative in response to a need to implement statutory changes. In Tulsa, the district attorney and a private organization, the Junior League, initiated the process of developing a formal protocol. A tragic failure to protect a Montgomery County child in the early 1970s spurred local administrators to adopt an unwritten policy that police and child protective service workers would jointly conduct all child abuse investigations. Later, state legislation required each county to develop a written interagency cooperative agreement.

Support from high level policy makers and administrators in each agency was among the elements most crucial to the successful development of an interagency agreement in the case-study agencies. This was most clearly illustrated by the development of protocols in Washtenaw County. A six-year project had already created an integrated policy development process at the county level: the sheriff, local police chiefs, the prosecutor, and county social services director had established an ongoing organizational framework for cooperation. When the sheriff's deputy responsible for investigating child abuse suggested that the county adopt a coordinated approach, the sheriff appointed her to draft an interagency protocol. Meanwhile, the sheriff obtained informal support for a coordinated approach from other agency heads, and arranged a meeting to review the plan. Following this meeting, each agency head appointed a mid-level team member to help design and implement the plan. Even with the endorsement of agency leaders, however, development of an interagency agreement required considerable time and effort. Team members first had to get to know each other and develop trust through numerous planning meetings, joint training sessions, and informal social events.

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When operational-level participants designated by the agency head play an active role in developing the protocols, the agreements prove more acceptable once developed. All line workers cannot be part of the planning team. Nevertheless, involving them in addressing logistical and other problems in coordination gives them a "stake" in the ongoing process and encourages active efforts to confront problems as they arise. It also tends to make the agreement more realistic about what can be accomplished. In San Francisco, the consultant who developed the written protocol consulted frequently with workers in each agency. Other sites, by contrast, failed to involve line staff. Resistance to the use of a center or, in some cases, confused lines of authority led to redesigning the personnel arrangements in the center.

### *A Paid Coordinator*

Because designing a strategy tailored to local patterns requires time and substantial effort, a paid coordinator focused on the task can facilitate the process. Paid coordinators are significantly more likely to be found in agencies with written agreements (28 percent) than those with informal arrangements (10 percent). Two case-study sites were able to obtain a paid coordinator because of a strong tradition of civic involvement and cooperation in community planning and social service coordination, as well as outside funds.

Since 1974, the San Francisco Child Abuse Council has worked for more coordinated community efforts on behalf of abused children, with state funds helping to support the salary of a coordinator. Interagency coordination began when the advisory committee in the Department of Public Health created the San Francisco General Hospital Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse Resource Center (or CASARC) to provide treatment to child sexual abuse victims. The committee was subsequently transformed into an ongoing Mayor's Advisory Committee on Sexual Abuse. Late in 1983, it launched what became a three year effort to establish interagency protocols, hiring a full-time consultant with funds from a state grant.

The protocols were developed in three phases. Initially the consultant developed a flow chart of the system. Next, he traced cases through the system and showed the clear need for better communication between police and child protective services. Finally, after extensive discussions with practitioners, he coordinated development of the protocols by writing complete descriptions of how roles would be altered in each agency. As one participant described the process, "initially we talked to him, then we talked through him, finally we began talking to each other."

The Tulsa Junior League, which has stimulated and supported several public agencies by providing money and volunteers, pays for a part-time coordinator. In 1989, the league joined with the district attorney in creating the District Attor-

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ney's Crimes against Children Task Force. The part-time coordinator has been valuable in facilitating development of an interagency agreement. In addition, she coordinates biweekly team review meetings, keeps the center open, and performs a variety of other administrative tasks.

As these examples illustrate, a coordinator may perform a variety of tasks. These range from convening and chairing meetings, shepherding or drafting protocols, arranging joint training sessions, encouraging information sharing, and administering a central facility, to arranging such details as parking for doctors at the court and social workers at the hospital. Cooperation and trust often are built on such small considerations.

### *Joint Training*

The experience of the case-study sites suggests that joint training is an essential element in implementing interagency cooperation and should be conducted before the agreement goes into effect. The training should give participants structured opportunities to address and dispel myths about other agencies; learn about each others' roles, mandates, and perspectives in handling child abuse cases; get to know their counterparts personally through informal social interaction among team members; acquire shared knowledge of important techniques (e.g. using anatomical dolls); and develop practice skills (e.g., interviewing children).

Given staff turnover and the development of new techniques, joint training must be an ongoing activity. The most effective training programs fulfill both the informational needs of participants and the organizational goal of fostering interpersonal bridges across agency staff.

### *Participating Agencies*

Planning an interagency agreement raises a variety of practical issues, including the question of which agencies should be involved in the initial effort. Based on survey responses and case-study findings, an effective interagency agreement initially should include, at a minimum, child protective services, the largest law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction, and the prosecutor. Eventually, all major human services agencies that serve children and families should participate. These would include the health department, medical societies or various local hospitals, child abuse prevention organizations, community mental health centers, school systems, the judiciary, probation departments, and relevant private organizations. Whether they are actively involved in the planning process from the start, as occurred in San Francisco and Washtenaw County, or are only subsequently drawn into more active participation, will depend on local conditions and their interest.

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## *Content and Nature of the Agreement*

Survey responses and case-study observations suggest that the police should receive immediate phone notice of designated cases, followed by a written report from the child protective agency. The police prefer to receive notice of too many reports so that they can screen out those that they will not investigate. They view the alternative of letting the child protective agency screen as posing a danger that they might miss cases requiring a criminal investigation if they are notified of too few or too narrow a range of reports.

Interagency agreements should specify cases for immediate notification and joint interviewing. Based on existing practices, it appears desirable that this occur in all sexual abuse cases and in cases of serious physical abuse and neglect.

Friction between the police and the child protective agency is sometimes generated by the question of who "controls" the joint interview with the victim. In Montgomery and Washtenaw Counties, the issue was resolved in a written agreement. It provides that, as long as a criminal prosecution is possible, the police will take the lead in order to reduce the possibility that asking leading questions or otherwise destroying evidence might undermine the case. These agreements leave room for modifications in how the joint interview will be conducted, depending on the skills of the individuals involved and the victim's preference. Although there has been little question that the police should control interviews with the suspect. In some instances, the child protective agency investigators have conducted the preliminary interview with the individual later found to be the abuser.

Whatever the scope of interagency activities, it is preferable that they be set out in a written document that clearly states each agency's roles and responsibilities and establishes a mechanism for reviewing and modifying the agreement. Certainly, an informal agreement that works is preferable to a hollow written document that simply fulfills a legal mandate. And an informal set of understandings may be a useful basis for developing an interagency agreement (as illustrated by Montgomery County). In the long run, however, a written protocol offers several advantages. First, by forcing participants to articulate their roles and responsibilities, it increases the mutual understanding of duties. Second, the process of designing the agreement builds relations among participants across agencies. Third, a written protocol assures an institutional memory and provides a systematic way to inform new workers and supervisors of goals and procedures as turnover inevitably occurs. To adapt to changing circumstances, though, the protocol should incorporate a mechanism for review and revision.

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## A Central Facility

Some communities have established a single center or facility for joint interviews and interagency meetings. Creation of such a center raises difficult questions: Which agency will be responsible for it? Which agencies should be co-located within it? Should it have a paid coordinator? How will the rent and coordinator's salary be paid? There are no single or simple answers to these questions.

In Tulsa, the Junior League funded a separate, conveniently-located center with a paid coordinator even before interagency protocols and actual mechanisms regarding joint interviews had been adopted or cross-training had occurred. The coordinator greatly facilitated the creation of a working system, but the center had only been in operation for six months at the time of our site visit (September 1988) and could not be evaluated at that time.

In San Francisco, the protocols specify that initial interviews of sexual (but not physical) abuse victims are to be conducted at CASARC headquarters in the San Francisco General Hospital. Although this facility is across the city from police offices, investigators routinely meet there for joint interviews and occasionally for interdisciplinary reviews of complex cases.

In Montgomery County, after conducting joint investigations out of separate facilities for over a decade (although the night duty child protective service worker had a desk at the youth division office), the Children's Help Center was created. The center is in a new county-owned building shared by the Department of Social Services, the health department, and the Sexual Assault Service of the Department of Victims, Addictions, and Mental Health. Unfortunately, establishment of the center caused interagency friction, and the initial reassignment of health and mental health workers to the Department of Social Services (since rescinded) led to administrative chaos. Although the workers have been returned to their agencies and the center is operational, the initial plan to establish a center similar to the Children's Advocacy Center in Huntsville, Alabama has been abandoned. The state's attorney does not appear to have taken an active role in the center's development, and neither police nor prosecutors have offices at the center. The police dropped out early in the discussions of plans for "co-location" when it became clear that there would be a fragmentation of the youth division and relocation of only some investigators.

Washtenaw County has neither a paid coordinator nor a separate center at which joint interviews can be conducted. Indeed, at the time of the site visit, none of the agencies participating in the protocol had a separate child-centered interview room (although the sheriff's department later established one). Nevertheless, investigators from participating agencies have frequent contacts, conduct joint interviews in schools or victim's homes, and are focusing efforts on acquiring a victim-witness coordinator rather than a central site.

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Another model for interagency coordination similar to the Children's Advisory Center established by the prosecutor in Madison County, (Huntsville) Alabama, is the Children's Sexual Abuse Center in DuPage County, Illinois. The governments of DuPage County's 34 incorporated villages and cities established the center in an intergovernmental agreement to:

coordinate treatment, service, investigation, and prosecutorial components of child sexual abuse into a unified system designed to provide an effective multidisciplinary approach to dealing with child sexual abuse incidents and victims.

The center is operated by a governing board composed of the state's attorney, the field service coordinator of the center, the program operations coordinator of the Department of Children and Family Services, the presidents of the Chiefs of Police Association and the Juvenile Officers Association, and the mental health division director of the County Health Department. The center coordinator acts as the community liaison, coordinating center activities, supervising the work of investigative teams, and assisting the multidisciplinary professionals engaged at the center.

Local police agencies refer all cases of intrafamilial and caretaker child sexual abuse, and all other sexual offenses whose victims are under sixteen, to one of the two teams of center investigators. Two of these investigators are provided by the state Department of Children and Family Services; two are trained law enforcement investigators appointed by the governing board. Each case is reviewed at a weekly review team meeting. Each of the municipal corporations that have signed the agreement, as well as the sheriff's department, contribute \$2000 annually to the center; the facilities are provided by the county government. The state's attorney provides one investigator, and the state Department of Children and Family Services provides two.

While particularly useful in counties with multiple law enforcement agencies, a centrally-located building or central site may facilitate coordination but is not its essence, as illustrated by Washtenaw County. In general, however, a child-friendly environment and central location, where workers from various agencies routinely meet and work together, seems more likely to reduce trauma to victims of child abuse than a decentralized and uncoordinated approach. Recently the California Child Victim Witness Judicial Advisory Committee recommended that counties throughout the state create special child-oriented centers for interviewing child victim witnesses, and that a child interview specialist conduct the interviews.<sup>4</sup>

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## The Prosecutor's Role

As the criminal justice system becomes more involved in responding to child abuse, the prosecutor becomes increasingly important in coordinating responses across courts and agencies. For example, an assistant prosecutor with expertise in child abuse cases can consult on legal issues, to help the police and child protective service decide how to handle an investigation and, if the case reaches court, to make suitable recommendations concerning bonds and no contact orders.

Most police agencies reported being satisfied with their relation with local prosecutors. Half the responding police agencies characterized their relations with prosecutors as excellent, 43 percent as good, and only 7 percent as fair or poor.

One factor contributing to police satisfaction is the designation of one or more assistant prosecutors to specialize in child abuse cases. Because child abuse cases are intrafamilial and the primary victim is a child, they often raise difficult legal and social questions, so it is helpful to all concerned to have a prosecutor with the needed expertise. This appears to be the prevailing practice in large urban counties: 73 percent of the respondents stated that the prosecutor's office has one or more assistants assigned to handle all child abuse cases. Among the case-study agencies, all but Washtenaw County has several assistant prosecutors in the criminal division who specialize in child abuse cases. In Washtenaw County, the lack of specialization does not pose problems for two reasons. First, there is unusually low turnover among assistant prosecutors. Second, the assistant prosecutor responsible for juvenile court cases, who serves as primary liaison with the police and sheriff's office on child abuse cases, is also a member of the interagency task force that developed the cooperative agreement, and is widely regarded as an expert on juvenile justice throughout the state, providing expertise to other assistants handling difficult child abuse cases.

## Institutionalization

Even when interagency protocols appear to be working well, misunderstandings may arise, apathy may set in, personnel change may destabilize relationships, and harmonious relations can quickly deteriorate. An effective system, therefore, requires mechanisms to address these or any other nascent problems. Such mechanisms might include informal meetings of supervisors to deal with any emerging conflicts or referrals to the office of the mayor or other overarching policy or political office. Successful institutionalization of interagency cooperation involves ongoing efforts to retain and retrain old team members and to recruit and acclimate new ones, so that they adopt the values of the team.

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## Endnotes

1. M. A. Wycoff with M. Kealoha, *Creating the Multidisciplinary Response to Child Sex Abuse: An Implementation Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Police Foundation, 1988).
2. *Ibid.*
3. Montgomery County models its children's center on the one in Huntsville, Alabama.
4. California Child Victim Witness Judicial Advisory Committee, *Final Report* (Sacramento: California Attorney General's Office, 1988).



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## **Chapter 5**

# **Self-Assessment Guide**

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This chapter presents a self-assessment guide to assist police departments in examining their response to child abuse in light of the policies, practices, and structures that we explored. The items on the list include agency practices discussed in the preceding chapters. It is unlikely that any department will employ or be characterized by each item; some of them may even be inappropriate to the particular locality. Nevertheless, the list is designed to encourage agencies to review their own policies and practices and consider those concepts they might adopt.

### **A. Departmental Commitment**

1. Has the chief or sheriff made a serious commitment to address the problem of child abuse?
2. Has the chief or sheriff communicated this commitment to the relevant personnel?
3. Has the chief or sheriff provided adequate resources to those responsible for dealing with child abuse?
4. Has the chief, sheriff, or a high-ranking designee participated in the development of interagency cooperative efforts to address child abuse in the community?

### **B. Specialized Investigative Unit**

1. Does the agency have at least one investigator or a unit of investigators specifically assigned to child abuse cases?
2. Have all child abuse specialists received specialized training in interviewing children? In identifying signs and symptoms of child abuse?
3. Do child abuse investigators have responsibility for both sexual and physical abuse of children?
4. Are one or more investigators trained to conduct and responsible for carrying out proactive investigations of exploitation and child pornography cases? Is the child abuse unit responsible for these investigations?
5. Is the unit administratively located in a juvenile/youth unit or a criminal investigation division?

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6. Is someone in the unit responsible for reviewing and screening all cases referred by child protective workers and patrol officers?
  7. Do child abuse specialists investigate a high proportion of the cases reported and referred to the unit?
  8. Do the personnel in the investigative unit reflect the community with respect to race, ethnicity, sex, and language?

## **C. Investigative Capabilities**

1. Do investigators follow a well-developed interviewing protocol?
2. Are there clear intra-agency mechanisms for promptly notifying the child abuse unit of all reports and investigations of child abuse by other units in the department?
3. Do homicide detectives involve child abuse investigators in investigations of deaths of children where abuse is a possible factor?
4. Are there sufficient investigative personnel in the unit to handle the caseload?
5. What is the unit's turnover rate?
6. Is participation in this unit a clearly valued assignment?
7. Are unit selection procedures designed to attract and retain supervisors and investigators knowledgeable in psychology and human development?
8. Is there an informal support system or other procedures to minimize investigator burnout?
9. Is a trained investigator available (either on duty or on call) to respond to child abuse cases during the evening and on weekends?
10. Is a victim-witness coordinator available to provide support, referrals, and continued contact with the victim throughout processing of a court case?
11. Is videotape equipment available? Is it used selectively? Are taped victim interviews also used for investigator training and obtaining perpetrator confessions?
12. Do investigators have a suitable place to interview child victims?
13. Are there detailed procedures guiding the use of anatomical dolls and drawings in interviews with young children?
14. Are cases kept open until all leads are exhausted (as opposed to being exceptionally cleared to attain a high closure rate)?
15. How frequently do investigators obtain confessions from perpetrators?

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## **D. Role of Patrol**

1. Have policy and training materials emphasized the role of patrol officers in identifying cases?
2. Has the role of patrol in investigating cases been reduced by having the child protective agency refer calls directly to police specialists and by having patrol officers refer cases to those specialists (or to investigators in a larger agency with which the department has an interagency agreement) once they identify probable abuse?

## **E. Relations with Prosecutors**

1. Is there frequent informal consultation about cases with prosecutors?
2. Do prosecutors usually file charges when investigators request that they do so (either by signing arrest warrants, seeking indictments, or filing criminal information)?

## **F. Training**

1. Does pre-service training include at least four hours of instruction on handling child abuse?
2. Does the pre-service training include instruction by child abuse specialists and child protection personnel?
3. Is there in-service training for patrol officers that periodically reviews their reporting responsibilities and the indicators of abuse?
4. Do newly-assigned investigators receive at least 20 hours of training in child development and child abuse investigations?
5. Do investigators receive at least 20 hours per year training of specialized in-service training related to child abuse?
6. Is child abuse investigator training interdisciplinary in substance (i.e., does it include material related to forensic, mental health, child development, and community resource issues)? Are instructional personnel and class participants also drawn from several agencies?

## **G. Written Policies**

1. Does the agency have a written policy covering child abuse and neglect?
2. Has the policy been developed or reviewed in the past two years?

- 
3. Does the policy clearly specify the roles and responsibilities for case identification and investigations of dispatchers, patrol officers, and investigators?
  4. Does the agency have a written procedure for dealing with difficult or large-scale cases such as those with multiple victims, or those occurring in institutional settings like day-care centers?
  5. Does the written policy include the following elements:
    - a statement that interagency coordination is essential for effectively dealing with child abuse?
    - procedures for notifying the child protective agency?
    - guidelines for identifying cases of child abuse?
    - procedures for initial investigation?
    - guidelines for when to take a child into protective custody?
    - procedures for how to place a child into protective custody?
    - guidelines for when to make an arrest?
  6. Does agency policy on domestic disturbances or spouse abuse investigations include a directive to assess the safety of abused children in the home?

## **H. Interagency Agreements**

1. Does the agency have a written interagency cooperative agreement for handling investigations with:
  - child protective service agencies?
  - other local law enforcement agencies?
  - the local prosecutor?
  - medical and mental health agencies?
  - schools?
  - criminal or juvenile courts?
  - other public or private agencies?

- 
2. Does the agreement clearly specify the responsibilities of personnel of each of the agencies with respect to:
    - reporting?
    - notification procedures?
    - investigations?
    - protective custody?
    - review of problem cases?
  3. Does the agreement specify when a joint investigation is to be conducted?
  4. Does the agreement provide a mechanism for team review of problem cases?
  5. Does the agreement include a procedure for resolving conflicts among agency personnel?
  6. Do participants in the agreement (or the members of the multidisciplinary team) share a physical location?
  7. Does the agreement provide for a staff coordinator?
  8. Does the agreement include a procedure for evaluating its effectiveness and, if appropriate, modifying its provisions?
  9. Does the agreement provide for joint interdisciplinary training to team members?
  10. Does the agreement include an abuse prevention program in which law enforcement officers play an active role?

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# APPENDICES

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# Appendix A

## Interagency Agreement for the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse Cases: Montgomery County, MD Police Department

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES  
FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE CASES  
AGREED UPON BY:  
THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY POLICE  
THE TAKOMA PARK POLICE  
THE MARYLAND STATE POLICE, ROCKVILLE BARRACKS  
THE STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE LICENSING AND REGULATION

Because the Montgomery County Department of Social Services, the Montgomery County Police, the Takoma Park Police, The Maryland State Police, Rockville Barracks, the State's Attorney's Office, the Montgomery County Department of Health and the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation have a common interest in prompt investigation, professional collaboration and coordination, and expeditious prosecution of child abuse cases, the following guidelines are agreed upon to protect the welfare of children in Montgomery County.

**A. Receipt of Reports of Suspected Child Abuse:**

When either the Protective Services Unit of the Montgomery County Department of Social Services, or the respective Police Departments receive a report of suspected child abuse, they will immediately notify the other agency. If the State's Attorney's Office receives the initial report, that office will notify either Protective Services or the appropriate Police Department, which in turn, will alert the other agency immediately.

**B. Screening:**

Each report of suspected child abuse will be screened by Protective Services and the Police for validity and seriousness. If the social worker and police officer do not agree on how to proceed, supervisors at both agencies will review the report and decide on a proper response.

**C. Case Assignments:**

Once a suspected child abuse report is determined to be valid, it will be assigned to a social worker for immediate investigation. The Police will also be involved if the report meets the criteria described in Section D.

Reports of suspected child abuse will be given priority attention by the respective investigative agencies. As prescribed by Maryland State law, within 24 hours, the investigators will see the child victim, attempt to have an on-site interview with the child's caretaker, and assess the safety of the child victim and other children in the home.

**D. Investigations:**

**Category I:**

Protective Services and the Police will do joint investigations when any one of the following exists:

- a. the reported injury to a child requires hospitalization, medical examination and/or treatment;
- b. the reported injury is to a child 9 years of age or under;
- c. suspected sexual abuse is reported;
- d. suspected abuse of multiple victims is reported;
- e. the investigation is done on weekends or holidays.

In joint investigations the police investigator will make the final decisions in all aspects of the criminal investigation. This authority is in effect until it is apparent to the police investigator that criminal prosecution is not feasible or likely. The social worker will make the final decisions in all aspects pertinent to the child's custody and protection and the protection of other children in the home. Differences between the police investigator and the social worker will be referred to the appropriate supervisors for review.

**Category II:**

Protective Services will do independent investigations when there is a reported minor injury to a child 10 years of age or older.

Protective Services may begin an independent investigation but subsequently call upon the appropriate police for assistance when any one of the following exists:

- a) additional information leads to a Category I report;
- b) the investigation setting becomes unsafe after an initial investigation has begun. The Protective Services social worker will call 911 for immediate police assistance. The police officer will leave when the Officer and the Social Worker mutually agree that no danger exists.

**E. Investigative Procedures for Reports of Suspected Child Abuse in Child Care Centers:**

- I. When suspected child abuse is reported to have occurred in a child care center licensed by the Department of Human Resources, Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation, the Regional



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Manager of the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation will be notified by the Protective Services social worker that a report has been received and will be investigated. Any relevant information which may facilitate the investigation will be shared with the Police, Protective Services, Health Department, the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation, and the State's Attorney's representative.

- II. The Police and Protective Services investigators will begin a thorough investigation within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the report. If there are multiple victims, an investigation procedure may be implemented, involving multiple, simultaneous interviews with suspected child victims, family members, child care staff members, and other relevant persons.
- III. The Police will notify the licensee that an investigation is underway.
- IV. When appropriate the Police and Protective Services will notify parents of other children who attend or have attended the child care center that an investigation is underway.
- V. If the initial investigation or subsequent interviews reveal that children are in immediate danger, the investigators will take action to protect the children. If necessary they will remove the children from the child care center. The Regional Manager, as the representative of the licensing agency, will be notified immediately of the danger and of protective actions taken.
- VI. If it is deemed necessary to consider the closure of the child care center, the Police and Protective Services investigators will confer with the State's Attorney's representative and the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation representative to determine the appropriate action to be taken. This action may include suspension or revocation of the child care center's license, or petitioning the court for an injunction to close the child care center. If an injunction is secured against the child care center, the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation will notify the parents of enrolled children and child care referral services of the injunction.
- VII. The results of the Police/Protective Services investigation will be shared with the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation staff.
- VIII. After the Police/Protective Services investigation is completed, appropriate members of the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation staff will make a visit to the child

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care center to interview staff, review appropriate documents, and prepare a report addressing the following:

- a. actions and violations of policy which may have contributed to the alleged abuse;
- b. violations of licensing regulations;
- c. plans to correct any irregularities;
- d. possible administrative action.

This report will be shared with the Police, Protective Services, the State's Attorney's Office, and the Department of Health.

**P. Coordination:**

There will be a concerted effort by the staffs of Protective Services, the Police, the State's Attorney's Office, the Department of Health and the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation to productively collaborate and coordinate work on child abuse cases.

- I. Protective Services and the Police will confer with the Health Department as needed regarding medical attention for the child, and potential placement needs of the child if the home situation is unsafe. Protective Services will coordinate the medical and placement services to a child, if needed.
- II. The Protective Services social worker and the Police investigator will submit written reports of their investigative findings to the State's Attorney's Office within the time frames prescribed by statute.
- III. If necessary, the Police and an Assistant State's Attorney will confer prior to the charging process and arrest, regarding legal requirements.
- IV. In abuse investigations in child care centers, a multidisciplinary team involving the five agencies will be called after the Police/Protective Services investigation, and after the Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation staff makes a visit to the child care center to discuss:
  - a. findings and results of the investigations,
  - b. follow-up action to be taken by each of the five agencies,
  - c. corrective action to be taken by the licensee,
  - d. monitoring responsibility for the corrective action plan.

**G. Pre-Arrest and Arrest:**

- I. There will be an Assistant State's Attorney on an on-call basis for consultation on legal issues in child abuse cases.

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- II. If, as a result of consultation, it is deemed appropriate for an Assistant State's Attorney to respond to the location of the interview, then an Assistant State's Attorney will be available to do so.
  - III. The Police may make arrests in child abuse cases where they find evidence and investigative information to support criminal charges.
  - IV. The Ass'tant State's Attorney who attends bond hearings will request special bond conditions, such as no contact between the alleged child abuser and the child, or other bond conditions deemed necessary to protect the welfare of the child.

H. Pre-Indictment:

- I. The State's Attorney's Office will assign child abuse cases within 14 days of the receipt of the police report.
- II. After receiving the case assignment, an Assistant State's Attorney will decide whether it is necessary to interview the child to determine if the victim is able to testify in the criminal case. This decision will take into consideration factors such as the age, developmental stage, emotional or intellectual limiting factors of the child.
- III. The Police and/or the Protective Services worker will be available to accompany and assist the Assistant State's Attorney to interview the child victim.
- IV. The State's Attorney's Office will determine whether or not to proceed with an indictment in child abuse cases, after consultation with the Police and Protective Services

I. Post-Indictment and Trial Coordination:

- I. The State's Attorney's Office, the Protective Services staff and the police will coordinate the assignment of a Victim/Witness Coordinator in child abuse cases to do the following:
  - a) coordinate meetings among the Assistant State's Attorney, the child victim, and the investigators who will assist in the interview process;
  - b) inform witnesses of court dates or changes in scheduling;
  - c) assist the child victim who appears for a court hearing.
- II. The State's Attorney's Office will orchestrate the smooth progression of child abuse prosecutions through the criminal court system in an expeditious manner.

This agreement is entered into Nov. 16, 1988 by the parties indicated below. The terms and conditions of the agreement shall be amended only in writing executed by all parties.

October 21, 1988  
Date

Robert S. Caulk  
Robert S. Caulk, Ph.D., Director  
Montgomery County Department of Social  
Services

Nov. 2, 1988  
Date

Donald E. Brooks  
Colonel Donald E. Brooks, Chief  
Montgomery County Police

October 27, 1988  
Date

A. Tony Fisher  
A. Tony Fisher, Chief  
Takoma Park Police Department

Nov. 16, 1988  
Date

Robert McAfee  
Lt. Robert McAfee, Commander, Maryland  
State Police, Rockville Barracks

November 2, 1988  
Date

Andrew L. Sonner  
Andrew L. Sonner, State's Attorney  
Montgomery County State's Attorney

November 16, 1988  
Date

Martin P. Wasserman, M.D., J.D.  
Martin P. Wasserman, M.D., J.D.  
Director  
Montgomery County Department of Health

November 15, 1988  
Date

Alice Littlefield  
Alice Littlefield, J.C.S.W.  
Regional Manager  
Office of Child Care Licensing and Regulation  
Region V

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# Appendix B

## Protocol for Coordinated Interagency Response to Child Sexual Abuse: San Francisco, CA Police Department

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PROTOCOLS FOR COORDINATED INTERAGENCY RESPONSE TO  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of these protocols is to ensure the timely exchange of pertinent information between the various agencies providing services in cases of child sexual abuse. They are intended to enhance the prospects for coordinated intervention, reduce delays in response to high risk cases, and facilitate timely and appropriate referrals for follow-up with therapeutic and supportive services. The protocols are based on the assumption that optimal dispositions in the child welfare, criminal justice and clinical service systems require swift and coordinated action at the earliest stages of intervention. Such action established the legal leverage necessary to ensure the safety and support of the victim and nonoffending family members.

A distinction is made between cases involving offenders who reside in the child's home and those where the offender is extra-familial. In the former case, the Department of Social Services always assumes the responsibility for assessing the risk to the child. In the latter case, the Department of Social Services does not automatically get involved. Their involvement is typically sought only when the investigating police officer or CASARC worker identifies

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child welfare concerns in the victim's family; believes that the sexual abuse occurred as a consequence of parental neglect; or suspects that the offending relative has continuing access to the child. This places an additional burden of responsibility on the investigating police officer or CASARC worker whose primary responsibilities are, respectively, the investigation of a crime and the provision of medical and crisis assessment and short-term treatment. Other researchers and our own survey of cases in San Francisco informs us that the majority of the victims of resident and extra-familial offenders do not differ significantly with respect to their problems at the point of intake or with respect to their need for follow-up and supportive services. In the absence of someone with a responsibility for longterm case management however, the victims of extrafamilial offenders (strangers, neighbours, relatives living outside the home, etc.) are less likely to receive needed services. Use of these protocols and guidelines for assessment and referral will increase the likelihood that cases involving extra-familial offenders will be referred back to DSS where child welfare concerns emerge, and referred on for clinical services when appropriate.

To reduce the chances that cases will fall through the cracks beyond initial intake, the entire response system -- especially criminal justice, child welfare, health and mental health agencies -- must coordinate their planning. To this end, the protocols set our requirements for mutual notification of the status of a case at critical points of dispositions. Documentation in each agency will also include an updated list of all of the persons providing service to the case in the various agencies.

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Memorandum of Understanding

This memorandum is to formalize an agreement among the undersigned and their respective agencies regarding the handling of cases of child sexual abuse. We further agree to participate in training to support implementation of these protocols.

This memorandum will be reviewed one year from the signature date.

-----  
Frank Jordan, Chief  
San Francisco Police Department

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Lillian Johnson, Director,  
Family & Childrens Services,  
San Francisco Department of  
Social Services

-----  
Paul Kotta, Captain  
SFPD Juvenile Division

-----  
Arlo Smith, District Attorney

-----  
Marge Harrer, Director  
Child & Adolescent Sexual Abuse  
Resource Center (CASARC)

-----  
Reiko Homma True, Phd.  
Deputy Director of Health  
for Mental Health Programs

-----  
Arlene Sauser  
Chief Adult Probation Officer

-----  
Nancy Rubin, Chief  
Forensic Services

-----  
Pnina Tobin, Executive Director  
Childrens' Self-Help Project

-----  
Ira Okun, Executive Director  
Family Service Agency of  
San Francisco

-----  
Melissa Miller, District Manager,  
Child Care Unit, SDCS Community  
Care Licensing

-----  
Rinna Flohr, Acting Director  
Center For Special Problems

● Protocol for Sexual Abuse Cases - Oct. 1986

\* Sign and date, please

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PROTOCOL FOR JUVENILE DIVISION RESPONSE  
TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Intake and Assignment

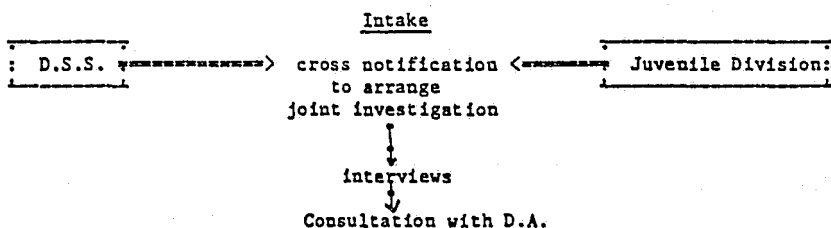
When a complaint of child abuse is received at Police Communications, sexual abuse cases will be routed directly to the Juvenile Division during the daytime (from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and to Operations at night (from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.) During the daytime, the Juvenile Investigator will make immediate contact with the DSS Emergency Response Unit. At night, the police patrol forces will transport the child, non-offending parent(s) and other family members to CASARC where the child's first interview should be conducted with a Juvenile Investigator present whenever possible. If CASARC sees the case first, they will call the Juvenile Division directly during the day, and Operations at night. It is the intent of this protocol to lessen the number of repetitive interviews of victims. To that end, the Juvenile Division and other agency representatives should coordinate their initial interview, preferably at CASARC.

In-Home Sexual Abuse Cases

The Investigator should address any concerns of the person who reports the abuse, regarding retaliation, confidentiality or follow-up. Anonymous calls should be accorded equal weight at intake, and the allegation of the anonymous reportee recorded as precisely as possible.



In cases where the alleged offender resides in the child's home, is a member the child's family or has continuing access to the child, the police investigator and the DSS worker should act as a team in the investigation and assessment of the report. Initiation of the investigation should not be delayed unduly in the event of scheduling problems which may be associated with arranging a joint investigation. The effort to arrange a joint investigation should be made prior to initiation of an investigation by either agency alone. That effort should be documented in the case file in both agencies. Where a joint investigation and interview of the victim is not initially possible (for example, at night), close cooperation and coordination should be established between the police investigator and the DSS worker in their subsequent involvements in the case. Either of these two may consult with the DA at any stage of the case, and the DA will function to advise investigations of additional materials necessary to the criminal proceedings.



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### Interview of the Child Victim

The Police-DSS team should try to interview the child together as soon as possible. If an initial interview was recorded at CASARC, the Police-DSS team should review that first interview. In the event that a complaint originates at school or in the home, the DSS-Police team will initiate the investigation in either of these locations. Once enough information has been gathered to establish the child's need for protection, CASARC should be considered as the location for further assessment because of its suitability for this purpose. Factors to consider in determining the location of the initial interview include:

- where and how disclosure occurs;
- reaction of the non-offending parent(s);
- location of the abuse;
- whether siblings were involved;
- where the victim will be safe;
- minimizing interruptions;
- the whereabouts of the alleged offender.

The interview should be conducted jointly with either the police investigator or DSS worker designated as primary interviewer, depending on their rapport with the child. (Joint training will be required in order that this interview achieve both purposes of establishing the elements of a crime and assessing the child's need for protection.) Although it is preferable to interview the child alone, she/he should be offered the choice of whether or

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not to have someone else present for support (eg. parent, teacher, friend, CSHP worker.) That person must then be instructed not to participate in the questioning. The seating should be arranged so that person is not in the child's line of vision during the interview. (For more detailed guidelines in conducting an investigatory interview with a child witness, see Appendix B.)

The interview should be audio-taped. The nature and purpose of the tape should be explained to the child, the non-offending parent(s) or other support person.

To encourage communication, age appropriate language should be used, as well as anatomically-correct dolls, drawings, etc. Any written statement should be in the language and sexual vocabulary of the child.

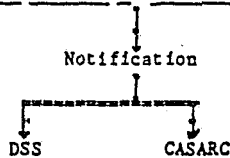
The Police-DSS team should proceed on the assumption that the child's report warrants investigation, including interviews with collaterals. A subsequent recanting by the child should not be taken as proof that the abuse did not occur, but rather as indication that further assessment is required to determine the presence of any pressure on the child to recant. The investigation should include exploration of the child's concern about the consequences of disclosure and investigation.

When the Police-DSS team's initial interviews with the child and collaterals do not yield sufficient disclosure, identification of an offender, or corroborating evidence, the Police investigator should not consider the case closed at this stage. The child and non-offending caretaker or parent or referent should be encouraged to contact either agency with any new information, questions or complaints. The Police investigator should also arrange a follow-up interview to ascertain any changes in the child's

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disclosure or the family's circumstances within the first week. If subsequent interview do not yield evidence sufficient for prosecution and the investigation is closed, the case file shall then be reviewed by the commanding officer to determine whether closure is appropriate. DSS and CASARC shall then be notified of the closing. The child and non-offending caretaker or parent or referent should be encouraged to contact either agency with any new information, questions or complaints. If new information emerges or a new complaint arises, the case will be reopened for investigation. Where possible, the case should be assigned to the same DSS and Police team who undertook the initial investigation. Similarly, if a follow-up interview at CASARC yields additional information, the investigator will reactivate the investigation upon receipt of information pertinent to the investigation.

Case Closure at Juvenile Division



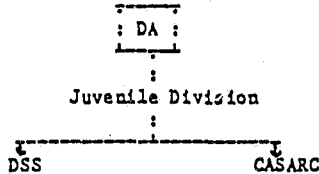
It is the responsibility of the police investigator to ensure that all pertinent evidence including results of the forensic medical examination and written statements are collected.

If the evidence warrants it, consultation should be sought with the child abuse unit in the DA's office with respect to proceeding with a prosecution. If it is the DA's opinion that additional evidence is needed for prosecution, then he/she must advise the police investigator what additional evidence is required to enable prosecution. The investigator shall then communicate that

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information to the CASARC and DSS workers so that they can notify the investigator and the DA's office if additional evidence emerges.

Notification re: Evidence or Prosecution



When a decision is made not to prosecute an alleged offender, the DA shall communicate the reason for that decision to the police investigator in writing. The police investigator will then communicate this information orally to the DSS and CASARC workers and to the victim and victim's family.

Similarly, when the police investigator and the DA have arrived at a decision to charge the suspect but anticipate problems of substantiation at trial, as for example when a child witness is ambivalent about proceeding, then those concerns must be communicated back through the system. This should transpire via the same communication route; that is, from the DA to the Investigator and from the Investigator to DSS and CASARC and from CASARC to any other service providers involved in the case. The various service providers can then ameliorate these evidentiary problems through additional support and preparation.

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### Family Interviews

The Police-DSS team should interview the non-offending parent(s) in person immediately. This interview should be audio-taped or reduced to a written statement and signed as soon as possible. The team should assess the non-offending parent's capacity to believe, protect, and support the child through the investigation.

Where there are siblings or other children in the home who may have had contact with the offender or who might have additional information to impart, each should be interviewed separately and in private by the investigating team.

The initial assessment interview should also provide support and information for the non-offending parent(s) including referrals to CASARC and to Victim Witness for compensation claims processing. CASARC can then assess the service needs of the family and make appropriate referrals.

### Interview of the Suspect

Initial contact with the suspect should occur as soon as possible.

In cases where the alleged offender is said to reside in the child's home or to have immediate access to the child, the suspect shall be interviewed prior to the child's returning home. The investigator shall fully disclose the substance of the interview to the DSS worker. In some cases, this will require the child's being booked for temporary shelter pending a Police-DSS assessment

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of the non-offending parent's ability to protect, believe, and support the child.

Irrespective of whether the suspect or the evidence confirms the abuse at this early stage of investigation, the police investigator should urge the suspect to vacate the child's residence and desist contact with the child pending completion of the investigation. This should be urged whether or not a warrant is being considered at this point. Whenever the evidence permits, a warrant should be sought and executed at the earliest possible date.

In intra-familial situations, the DSS-Police team should use every effort to remove the suspect from the home rather than the child. Even where the family's response to the crisis is such that it is deemed necessary for the child to be removed from the home for a short period, every effort must still be made to remove the suspect and restrict his influence on the family. Options may include the following:

A voluntary agreement by the offender to leave, accompanied by the non-offending parent's support for this plan, should be sought but should not be considered sufficient in itself.

The non-offending parent may seek a restraining order or an interim "no access" order as part of a decision to obtain a legal separation and sole custody of the children.

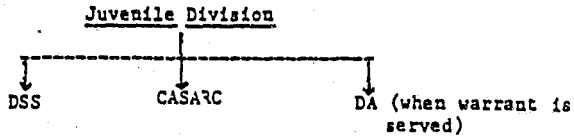
When a suspect is criminally charged, a "no contact" order should be requested as a condition of bail or O.R.

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All outcomes of the Police Investigator's interviews with the suspect and subsequent consultation with the DA must be communicated at once to the DSS and/or CASARC worker involved since these outcomes will have an impact on their own planning for intervention and treatment with the child and family.

Notification of Outcome of Suspect Interview



When an arrest is initiated by warrant, the Police Investigator will notify the DA as soon as he or she learns that the warrant had been served. This will enable the DA to be present when the defendant appears on calendar in order to obtain "no contact" as a condition of bail or O.R. The Police Investigator must therefore inform the DA of all available facts on the case in advance of the bail hearing.

Any violations of bail or O.R. conditions or civil orders should be reported to the Police Investigator and necessary action taken.

Out-Of-Home Sexual Abuse Cases

Out-of-home sexual abuse cases include all molests, sexual assaults and other forms of child sexual exploitation which are perpetrated by someone who lives outside the child's home and who is not a member of the child's family. For purposes of these protocols, they include all those cases in which the



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Department of Social Services does not initially assume jurisdiction. Juvenile court proceedings are unlikely in out-of-home sexual abuse cases unless it becomes evident to the Police Investigator or CASARC worker that the child was abused as a consequence of parental neglect or inability to protect the child, or when it is learned that the offender has continuing access to the child.

In the absence of DSS involvement, a coordinated response by CASARC and the Juvenile Division becomes all the more important. Police Investigators and CASARC workers must also consider the child protection issues which might arise in the course of a criminal investigation. The provision of follow-up and therapeutic services depends on coordinated case-management by these two agencies. With these objectives in mind, the investigation of out-of-home sexual abuse cases will differ from in-home cases in the following ways.

#### Interview of the Child Victim & Family

In cases where the report to the Police originates at CASARC, the Investigator shall review with the CASARC worker all information gathered there. The CASARC worker can then introduce the Police Investigator to the child. The investigatory interview should then proceed with the Police Investigator and CASARC worker acting as a team. Though the emphasis in these cases will be on establishing the elements of a crime, it will still be important for the Police-CASARC team to assess the protection and support available to the child. The attached guidelines for assessment (Appendix A) may be useful for helping to determine a child's need for support and

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protection. Following the initial interview, the Police Investigator and the assigned CASARC worker should maintain contact in order to share emergent findings and evidence. When the Investigator or CASARC worker have concerns about the child's welfare, the Investigator will report those concerns to DSS. When the CASARC worker and the Police investigator disagree about the necessity of a report to DSS, a case conference will be called at the earliest possible date. This conference will include the Police Investigator and the CASARC worker, their respective supervisors and a DSS worker or supervisor. If a DSS investigation is initiated at this point, then the case should proceed in the same manner as an in-home sexual abuse case.

In those cases which do not originate at CASARC, the Police Investigator should, where indicated, begin the substantive interviews at CASARC, whether or not medical assessment is necessary. This will provide for joint assessment of any child welfare concerns, crisis intervention, and immediate referrals for supportive services. This will also avail the Investigator of the additional techniques and materials available in a joint interview with the CASARC worker, and may reduce the number of times a child has to answer the same questions.

Where the family selects clinical services other than CASARC'S , or no clinical services, it is the Investigator's responsibility to assess the child's need for support and protection and to involve DSS if any child welfare concerns arise. Where CASARC and DSS are not involved, it will be the responsibility of the Police Investigator to make a referral to Victim Witness and to provide a list of resources for treatment and support services. (See

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attached Resources List, Appendix F). For additional resource information and referrals, the Investigator can call CASARC.

#### Interview of the Suspect

The procedure for out-of-home abuse cases will be essentially the same as that followed in cases of in-home sexual abuse, except that the suspect will not have to be urged out of the child's home. Consultation with the DA and notification to the other agencies involved will follow the same procedure.

Where the Investigator learns that the suspect in an out-of-home sexual abuse case is a parent of dependent children or is otherwise living with children, the Investigator shall report this to DSS for the purposes of initiating a new joint investigation with respect to those children.

When an allegation involves a foster parent, the DSS Foster Care Unit should also be involved immediately. In those facilities which have a family daycare license, Community Care Licensing should also be involved.

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## **Appendix C**

# **Research Methodology**

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This appendix describes in greater detail the research design and data analysis plan employed in the telephone survey and case studies.

### **Telephone Survey**

The telephone survey was designed to: (1) describe existing policies and procedures for identifying, investigating, and otherwise handling cases of abuse and neglect; (2) explore the formal and informal interagency cooperative arrangements for dealing with abuse; and (3) identify promising departments and individual strategies for dealing with physical and sexual offenses against children.

A 50 percent random sample of all municipal and county law enforcement agencies serving jurisdictions with populations over 100,000 was selected from a data tape of law enforcement agencies obtained from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports section. Letters soliciting cooperation were sent to the heads of 89 municipal and 57 county agencies in spring of 1988.

Eighty-six percent (126 of 146) of the departments responded, a rate which exceeded our expectations. We completed telephone surveys with 122 of those agencies that agreed to participate, received statistical data from 59, and copies of agency policies or guidelines from 67.

The distribution of responding agencies closely resembled the full sample with respect to region. However, there were higher response rates from municipal agencies (86 percent) than from county agencies (primarily sheriff's departments) (76 percent), and from agencies with 250 sworn officers or more (91 percent) than from those with fewer than 250 officers (73 percent). Thus, while our findings are not representative of law enforcement agencies nationwide, they do provide a reasonably representative sample of large agencies in urban and suburban areas.

Telephone interviews took about an hour each. They sought information about interagency reporting and case screening procedures; agency organization for conducting child abuse investigations (e.g., the existence and organizational location of specialized units); actual procedures for investigating various types of child abuse cases; factors that affect the decision to arrest in physical and sexual abuse cases; the scope and nature of interagency cooperative agreements practices and relations; the amount of training received by agency personnel;

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and ways to improve agency responses to child abuse and neglect cases. (See Appendix D for the instrument.)

The interview instrument was pretested in four sites and revised prior to initiation of the interviews, which were conducted by four trained interviewers and the Police Foundation study director.

In all agencies, our informants were persons designated by the chief to respond to the survey and provide written information. In most departments, the chief designated the sergeant or lieutenant in charge of the child abuse squad or unit; in small departments the specialized investigator who handles most of the child abuse cases tended to be assigned. Thus our informants generally were persons familiar with the ongoing operations and department policies for handling child abuse, and were authorized to provide such information. Because they spoke for their agencies, they tended to provide "socially desirable" answers. At the same time, many made clear that there was room for improvement both in the practices of their department and related agencies.

We requested written copies of agency policies and statistical data on 1987 cases and their dispositions. We received copies of policies from 87 percent (67 out of 77) of the agencies that said they had written policies. The contents of these were coded in terms of the presence of various specific elements (e.g., procedures for notifying CPS). Similarly, we obtained some or all of the statistical information we requested on completed "Statistical Information Forms" from 60 of the responding agencies (see Appendix D). These data, however, often were incomplete and inconsistent.

Some problems stemmed from the unavailability of data. For example, many agencies provided information on the total number of closures but not by type of offense or disposition. Other problems were due to our failure to include on the form one or more of the categories agencies use for classifying cases. For example, several California and Texas agencies sent information regarding both cases for which a "crime report" was completed (which we defined as constituting an investigation) and those for which an "information report" was filed (where the police reviewed cases referred by child protection but decided not to pursue an independent investigation).

Some agencies could not send statistics because offense reports and arrests are classified by crime category, without regard to the age of the victim or his/her relationship to the offender. Thus, unless a specialized investigative unit kept its own records, departments could only determine if a reported rape, criminal sexual conduct, or aggravated assault was an instance of child sexual abuse by conducting a laborious hand-search of the records.

A final shortcoming of the data is the likely lack of consistency across categories. Although we provided standard definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and

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neglect, (see Appendix D), legal definitions of these offenses or behaviors vary by state, and the actual standards applied by officers vary depending on department policies and local courts' standards of what is constituted as, for example, "aggravated assault," "unreasonable force" or "serious physical injury."

## **Case Studies**

The four case studies were conducted to provide in-depth views of the actual day-to-day investigative procedures and implementation of interagency coordination agreements. The case study sites were selected by the project's advisory board from 26 candidate agencies that emerged from responses to the telephone survey, additional telephone interviews with over 20 experts in the field of child abuse, and consultation with the board. The criteria for selecting the departments for case study included the completeness of the agency's written child abuse policy, the amount of training received by rookies and child abuse specialists, the availability of child-friendly interview facilities and various technological aids, the scope and nature of the interagency agreement, and considerations of size, agency type, and region. At each site, we interviewed prosecutors specializing in child abuse cases, child protection unit supervisors and workers, treatment personnel, and others involved in the jurisdiction's interagency child abuse efforts, as well as the relevant police officials and staff. In three of the sites, the visits also included observations of police interviews with victims and alleged perpetrators and of interagency meetings.

The candidate agencies were selected through a three-step process. First, over 20 experts in the field of child abuse (including researchers, police investigators and trainers, prosecutors, child welfare administrators, and medical personnel) were contacted by phone and asked both to suggest criteria for identifying "exemplary" departments with respect to their handling of child abuse (see Appendix E) and to identify those departments they believed most closely fit those criteria.

Second, the telephone survey interviewers were given a draft of the selection criteria and, after completing each interview, indicated whether the agency appeared to be a candidate department.

Third, analysis of the telephone survey data led to the development of four primary indicators. These included a measure of the completeness of the agency's written child abuse policy (9 or more of the 17 elements included in our coding scheme); the amount of training received by both rookies (more than 4 hours) and specialists (more than 80 hours in 1987); a facilities and technology measure (whether the agency used video selectively, had a prevention program, anatomical dolls, a child-friendly interview facility, and specialists who serve as consultants outside the agency), and a composite measure of the completeness of the interagency agreement and frequency of team meetings.

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Twenty-five agencies met the policy criteria, 24 met the training standard, 15 qualified on the technical criteria, and 19 on the interagency coordination criteria. No department was "exemplary" in all four categories; several were included on three of those lists. Each of these, if not already on the list, was added.

Nine agencies were included on the list of 26 as a result of the suggestions of the experts. Two of these agencies had been survey pre-test sites; two others which otherwise would not have been contacted but for frequent nominations were informally contacted and a representative interviewed. Five of the sites were added to the list on the basis of interviewers' recommendations.

Thus the final list represented a blend of subjective and objective data. Though not comprehensive, it offered ample choice among agencies that appeared to be doing innovative work in the child abuse area, often with little recognition, and that were diverse with respect to program model, region, agency type, and size.

The final choices reflect an effort to balance these concerns with geography, organization, program, and policy.

- The Tulsa (Oklahoma) Police Department is a medium-sized agency, representative of the southwest, that was in the process of developing an interagency protocol under the aegis of the district attorney with the assistance of a paid coordinator. The department's specialized sex and physical abuse squads are located in the criminal investigation division.
- The Washtenaw County (Michigan) Sheriff's Department is a small midwestern county agency that initiated an interagency protocol involving a wide variety of county agencies. Its single child abuse investigator is assigned to the criminal investigation division.
- The San Francisco (California) Police Department is a large urban department in the west where the role of the patrol officer/road deputy has been reduced and investigations are instead conducted by juvenile division investigators who are on call 24 hours a day. Several experts offered high praise for its well-designed interagency protocol.
- The Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department serves an eastern, largely suburban population. It has had an interagency cooperative agreement in place for more than a decade and was in the process of developing a physically-separate children's center. Its child abuse investigators are part of the youth division. It has a separate squad focusing on proactive investigations of sexual exploitation and pedophiles.

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Four-day visits were conducted at each of these sites. To gain a comprehensive understanding of each department's approach to dealing with child abuse, the history of its program, program procedures, and the nature of intra- and inter-agency coordination, a number of people were interviewed: supervisory and investigative personnel in the child abuse units (and in Washtenaw County, investigators from the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor Police Departments; in Tulsa an investigator from the Broken Arrow Police Department); child protective services supervisors; the prosecutor(s) responsible for handling child abuse cases; medical personnel treating sex abuse victims; and personnel from a variety of other agencies involved in the interagency cooperative agreements in the various sites. Structured formal interview protocols were developed but were amply supplemented through informal discussions. In addition, the site visitor observed several interviews with victims and parents, attended interagency meetings, and participated in the routine activities of several child abuse investigators at each site.



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# Appendix D

## Telephone Interview Form and Supplementary Information Form

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3/22/88

POLICE HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, and SEXUAL EXPLOITATION  
Telephone Interview Form

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_ Agency ID # \_\_\_\_\_ (1-3)

[leave col.4 blank]

### PRE-INTERVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the name of chief in the blank space on page 2.
2. Review the policies that were sent in and pre-code the answers to questions 13-14 and 37-44.
3. Review the supplementary data form with the statistics provided by the department. Note questions or problems. Insert data on investigations in blank for Q7 on page 5.  
If the form was not completed, but statistics were provided, try to complete the form and note questions to ask to be able to complete it.  
If no data were provided, get a blank supplemental form to complete during the interview. The completed supplementary data will be attached at the back of this interview form.
4. Note any ambiguities or questions to be clarified by the call in the margin of the survey instrument at the point where they fit into the interview.
5. If there are questions the following definitions apply:

**CHILD ABUSE** = Physical assaults (such as striking, kicking, biting, throwing, or burning) that caused, or could have caused, serious physical injury to the child.

**CHILD NEGLECT** = Failure to provide food, clothing, hygiene, or other needed care that caused, or over time would cause, serious physical injury, sickness or disability.

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE** = Vaginal, anal or oral intercourse; vaginal or anal penetrations; or other serious forms of inappropriate sexual contacts.

**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION** = Use of child in prostitution, pornography, or other sexually exploitative activities.

**INTERVIEWER INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from the Police Foundation in Washington, D.C. I was given your name by \*Chief/Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_ as my contact for the telephone survey we are conducting regarding the police handling of child abuse and neglect.

Let me begin by thanking you for the materials you already sent me. They were very helpful though I do have a few more questions about them. First, I want to ask you about reporting procedures. Before I do, however, could you tell me what you call your community's social services agency that deals with abused children?

INTERVIEWER: write the name of agency and use it throughout the interview when the survey refers to child protective services or CPS.

Q1. Does your department routinely report physical child abuse cases to Child Protective Services?

NO.....0 (Go to Q2) (5)  
YES.....1

1a. Are you required by state law to report instances of physical child abuse cases to CPS?

NO.....0 (6)  
YES.....1

Q2. Does your department routinely report sexual abuse cases to CPS?

NO.....0 (Go to Q3) (7)  
YES.....1

2a. Are you required by state law to report instances of sexual abuse cases to CPS?

NO.....0 (8)  
YES.....1

Q3. Does your department routinely report child neglect cases to CPS?

NO.....0 (Go to Q4) (9)  
YES.....1

- 3a. Are you required by state law to report instances of neglect to CPS?
- NO.....0 (10)  
YES.....1
- Q4. Does your department routinely get reports on all, some, or none of the physical abuse cases from CPS or another agency?
- NONE.....0 (Go to Q5) (11)  
SOME.....1  
ALL.....2
- 4a. Is that agency required by state law to make such reports to your department?
- NO.....0 (12)  
YES.....1
- Q5. What about reports on child sexual abuse cases? Does your department routinely get all, some, or none such reports from CPS or another agency?
- NONE.....0 (Go to Q6) (13)  
SOME.....1  
ALL.....2
- 5a. Is that agency required by state law to make such child sexual abuse reports to your department?
- NO.....0 (14)  
YES.....1
- Q6. Does your department routinely get reports on all, some or none of the neglect cases from CPS or another agency?
- NONE.....0 (Go to Q7) (15)  
SOME.....1  
ALL.....2
- 6a. Is that agency required by state law to make such neglect reports to your department?
- NO.....0 (16)  
YES.....1

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Q7. When you get reports of any type of child abuse from CPS or another agency do you complete investigations on every case that is reported or on only certain cases?

INVESTIGATE ALL REPORTS...1 (Go to Q.9) (17)  
ONLY SOME CASES.....2

Q7a. Who is responsible for reviewing the reports and selecting those cases that get investigated?

UNIT SECRETARY.....1 (18)  
OFFICER IN THE UNIT.....2  
UNIT SUPERVISOR.....3  
TEAM MEMBERS (CPS AND LE).4  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ .5  
(SPECIFY)

Q8. What are the criteria for selecting a physical abuse case for further investigation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (19)

Q8a. What are the criteria for selecting a sexual abuse case for further investigation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (20)

Q8b. What are the criteria for selecting a neglect case for further investigation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (21)

Now I would like to ask you some questions about the handling of child abuse investigations in your agency.

Q9. Are investigations of child physical abuse or neglect cases handled by a separate squad, unit or individual specialist in your agency? [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC LOCATION. RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM. CIRCLE APPROPRIATE CODE BELOW.]

- NO.....0 (22-23)
  - YES, ONE INDIVIDUAL IN CID.....1
  - YES, ONE INDIVIDUAL IN YOUTH/JUVENILE..2
  - YES, ONE INDIVIDUAL IN OTHER UNIT.....3
  - YES, ROTATED AMONG MEMBERS OF YOUTH/JUVENILE SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....4
  - YES, ROTATED AMONG MEMBERS OF SEX CRIMES SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....5
  - YES, ROTATED AMONG MEMBERS OF OTHER INVESTIGATIVE SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....6
  - YES, RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF YOUTH/JUVENILE SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....7
  - YES, RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF SEX CRIMES SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....8
  - YES, RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF OTHER SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....9
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD JUST FOR PHYSICAL ABUSE W/I YOUTH DIVIS...10
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD JUST FOR PHYSICAL ABUSE W/I OTHER UNIT....11
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD FOR BOTH PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE W/I JUVENILE/YOUTH DIVISION.....12
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD FOR BOTH PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE W/I CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION..13
  - MULTIAGENCY UNIT HANDLES.....14
  - OTHER \_\_\_\_\_.....15
- (SPECIFY)

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Q10. Are investigations of child sexual abuse handled by a separate unit, squad or individual specialist in the department? [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC LOCATION. RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM. CIRCLE APPROPRIATE CODE BELOW.]

- (24-25)
- NO.....0
  - YES, ONE INDIVIDUAL IN CID.....1
  - YES, ONE INDIVIDUAL IN YOUTH/JUVENILE..2
  - YES, ONE INDIVIDUAL IN OTHER UNIT.....3
  - YES, ROTATED AMONG MEMBERS OF YOUTH/JUVENILE SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....4
  - YES, ROTATED AMONG MEMBERS OF SEX CRIMES SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....5
  - YES, ROTATED AMONG MEMBERS OF OTHER INVESTIGATIVE SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....6
  - YES, RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF YOUTH/JUVENILE SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....7
  - YES, RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF SEX CRIMES SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....8
  - YES, RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL MEMBERS OF OTHER SQUAD WITH BROADER FUNCTIONS.....9
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD JUST FOR PHYSICAL ABUSE W/I YOUTH DIVIS...10
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD JUST FOR PHYSICAL ABUSE W/I OTHER UNIT...11
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD FOR BOTH PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE W/I JUVENILE/YOUTH DIVISION.....12
  - YES, SPECIALIZED SQUAD FOR BOTH PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE W/I CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION..13
  - MULTIAGENCY UNIT HANDLES.....14
  - OTHER \_\_\_\_\_...15  
(SPECIFY)

Q11. Who handles child exploitation investigations?

SEPARATE SQUAD/SPECIALIST W/I JUVENILE OR YOUTH DIVISION UNIT..1	(26)
SEPARATE SQUAD/SPECIALIST W/I CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION..2	
PART OF CHILD ABUSE UNIT'S BROADER FUNCTION.....3	
PART OF JUVENILE/YOUTH UNIT'S BROADER FUNCTION.....4	
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION.....5	
MISSING/RUNAWAY UNIT.....6	
DIVIDED RESPONSIBILITY.....7	
FUNCTION OF MULTIAGENCY UNIT.....8	
OTHER .....15	

(SPECIFY)

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE STATISTICS YOU PROVIDED US AND WHERE THE CASES YOUR AGENCY INVESTIGATES CAME FROM.

INTERVIEWER: Get Supplemental Statistics Page

1. If it is not completed, ask for data now and record them on the Supplemental Statistics Page.
2. If you have questions about the statistics ask them then go to Q12.

Q12. The figures you provided indicated that in 1987 you investigated

\_\_\_\_\_ cases of physical abuse and neglect and \_\_\_\_\_ cases of sexual abuse. Could you tell me if these numbers represent only those cases investigated by the specilaized child abuse unit or ALL cases investigated by dept?

Unit investigations.....1	(27)
ALL investigations.....2	
N.A. (no data provided).....9	

Now I'd like to ask you about your department's policies and general procedures for handling child abuse cases.

- INTERVIEWER: BE SURE Q. 13 AND 14 HAVE BEEN PRECODED.
1. IF POLICY(IES) WAS SENT AND IT SEEMS COMPLETE, THANK HIM/HER FOR IT AND GO TO Q15.
  2. IF POLICY(IES) WAS SENT BUT SEEMS INCOMPLETE (e.g., policy regarding juveniles in general) ASK IF WE GOT ALL THE WRITTEN POLICY NOW AVAILABLE IN DEPT.  
-IF YES, GO TO Q 15  
-IF NO, ASK POLICY QUESTIONS 13 AND 14.
  3. IF NO POLICY WAS SENT, ASK Q. 13 (AND 14 IF NECESSARY).

Q13. Does your agency have a written policy that specifically covers how handle child abuse and neglect cases?

NO.....0 (Go to Q.13c) (28)  
YES.....1

13a. When was this policy last revised or updated?

MONTH \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR \_\_\_\_\_ (29-30)  
(31-32)

13b. Does this policy [Does the policy which you sent us] define the responsibilities of all officers or only those assigned to specialized unit(s)?

ALL.....1 (33)  
UNIT.....2

13c. Although your agency doesn't have a specific policy regarding child abuse, do other written procedures such as those guiding the investigation of sex offenses or handling juveniles generally cover some cases of what we have defined as child abuse, child sexual abuse, or child sexual exploitation?

NO.....0 [Go to Q.17] (34)  
YES.....1



Q14. Does the agency's written policies include:

	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	
a. Guidelines or indicators for identifying possible cases of physical abuse?	0	1	(35)
b. Child sexual abuse cases?	0	1	(36)
c. Neglect cases?	0	1	(37)
d. Do the guidelines specify that officers should look at children for signs of abuse in handling spouse abuse cases?	0	1	(38)
e. Does the policy include procedures for conducting an <u>initial</u> investigation of child abuse?	0	1	(39)
f. Procedures for notification or reporting to CPS?	0	1	(40)
g. Procedures for follow-up investigation?	0	1	(41)
h. Guidelines on when to take a child into protective custody?	0	1	(42)
i. Procedures for what to do when a child is taken into protective custody (i.e., notifying parents, transporting child)?	0	1	(43)
j. Guidelines for how to interview victims of abuse?	0	1	(44)
k. Procedures for interviewing the alleged abuser?	0	1	(45)
l. Procedures for when and/or where to take a child for a medical diagnosis or treatment?	0	1	(46)
m. Guidelines suggesting when to make an arrest?	0	1	(47)
n. Procedures specifying how and what physical evidence to collect?	0	1	(48)
o. Guidelines specifying <u>which</u> cases will be jointly investigated with CPS?	0	1	(49)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	
p. Guidelines outlining responsibilities in a joint investigation with CPS?	0	1	(50)
q. Procedures for handling situation where investigating officer and Child Protective Service worker disagree regarding taking a child into protective custody?	0	1	(51)

Q15. How effective are your written policies as guides to specialists assigned to deal with child abuse investigations. Would you say they are very effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective or very ineffective?

VERY EFFECTIVE.....	1	(52)
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE.....	2	
SOMEWHAT INEFFECTIVE.....	3	
VERY INEFFECTIVE.....	4	
NO OPINION.....	9	

Q16. In general, how effective do you think your written policies are as a guide to patrol officers in conducting preliminary investigations or dealing with other aspects of child abuse cases? Would you say they are very effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective or very ineffective?

VERY EFFECTIVE.....	1	(53)
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE.....	2	
SOMEWHAT INEFFECTIVE.....	3	
VERY INEFFECTIVE.....	4	
NO OPINION.....	9	

Q17. What, if anything, do you think needs to be added to or clarified in the agency's existing written policies to help investigators more effectively handle child abuse cases?

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT.....	1	(54)
STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWING...	2	
GUIDELINES/SCENARIOS FOR HANDLING CASES.....	3	

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

(SPECIFY)

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Q18. Does your agency have written guidelines for 911 operators and/or dispatchers for prioritizing calls regarding child abuse and neglect?

NO.....0 (55)  
YES.....1  
DON'T KNOW...9

Q18a. How do dispatchers handle calls from citizens reporting suspected child abuse or neglect?

DISPATCHER ALWAYS SENDS PATROL UNIT.....1 (56)  
DISPATCHER SENDS PATROL IF ITS EMERGENCY;  
ELSE CALLS ABUSE UNIT.....2  
DISPATCHER REFERS ALL CALLS TO CHILD ABUSE  
UNIT.....3  
DISPATCHER SENDS PATROL AND NOTIFIES UNIT.....4  
DISPATCHER REFERS ALL CALLS TO CPS.....5  
DISPATCHER REFERS CALLER TO CPS EXCEPT ON  
WEEKENDS AND AT NIGHT; SENDS CALL TO  
CHILD ABUSE UNIT AT THOSE TIMES.....6  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_  
(SPECIFY)

Now I'd like to ask about coverage of emergency or critical situations at various times.

Q19. Is there a child abuse specialist on duty or on call between 5 pm and midnight on week days?

NO.....1 (57)  
YES, ON DUTY.....2  
YES, ON CALL.....3

Q20. What about between midnight and 8 a.m. on week days is there a child abuse specialist on duty or on call during those hours?

NO.....1 (58)  
YES, ON DUTY.....2  
YES, ON CALL.....3

Q21. Is there a child abuse specialist on duty or on call on weekends?

NO.....1 (59)  
YES, ON DUTY.....2  
YES, ON CALL.....3

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Q22. What about CPS coverage at these three times. Is there a worker on duty or on call between 5 pm and midnight who would respond to an emergency call?

NOBODY AVAILABLE.....0 (60)  
ON DUTY TO RESPOND.....1  
ON CALL.....2  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ .3  
(SPECIFY)

Q23. Is there a protective service worker on duty or on call via beeper between midnight and 8 A.M.?

NOBODY AVAILABLE.....0 (61)  
ON DUTY TO RESPOND.....1  
ON CALL (BEEPER).....2  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ .3  
(SPECIFY)

Q24. What about weekends, how does CPS cover emergencies?

NOBODY AVAILABLE.....0 (62)  
ON DUTY TO RESPOND.....1  
ON CALL (BEEPER) TO RESPOND....2  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ .3  
(SPECIFY)

Q25. If you received a call at 6 p.m. regarding a child with severe burns believed to be the result of child abuse, who in the department would respond to the hospital?

OFFICER FROM RESPONSIBLE UNIT ON DUTY, GOES TO THE HOSPITAL.....1 (63)  
OFFICER FROM UNIT ON DUTY BUT PATROL OFFICER GOES TO THE HOSPITAL TO SCREEN.2  
OFFICER FROM UNIT ON DUTY BUT DETECTIVE GOES TO HOSPITAL TO SCREEN.....3  
OFFICER FROM UNIT ON CALL AND WOULD GO.....4  
DETECTIVE FROM ANOTHER UNIT COVERS CALLS AND WOULD GO TO HOSPITAL.....5  
PATROL OFFICER WOULD COVER.....6  
OTHER (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q26. If you received a call at 6 p.m. regarding a child alleged to be the victim of sexual abuse who was at a local hospital, who would respond to the hospital?

- OFFICER FROM RESPONSIBLE UNIT ON DUTY, GOES TO THE HOSPITAL.....1 (64)
  - OFFICER FROM UNIT ON DUTY BUT PATROL OFFICER GOES TO THE HOSPITAL TO SCREEN.2
  - OFFICER FROM UNIT ON DUTY BUT HAS DETECTIVE GOES TO HOSPITAL TO SCREEN.....3
  - OFFICER FROM UNIT ON CALL AND WOULD GO.....4
  - DETECTIVE FROM ANOTHER UNIT COVERS CALLS AND WOULD GO TO HOSPITAL.....5
  - PATROL OFFICER WOULD COVER.....6
  - OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- (SPECIFY)

Q27. If there is a disagreement between the CPS worker and the police officer regarding whether to take a child into protective custody, who has final authority to make the decision?

- CPS.....1 (65)
  - OFFICER.....2
  - JUDGE.....3
  - D.A.....4
  - OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ .5
- (SPECIFY)

Q28. Does the unit or department have a child abuse prevention program that officers present in the local schools?

- NO.....0 (66)
- YES.....1

Q29. Are child abuse victims interviewed in a separate facility or interview room designed especially for children?

- NO.....0 (67)
- YES.....1

Q30. Does your agency use anatomically correct dolls for interviewing victims of sex abuse?

- NO.....0 (68)
- YES.....1

Q31. Do you videotape all, some or none of the interviews with victims of child abuse or sex abuse?

NONE.....0 (69)  
 SOME.....1  
 ALL.....2

Q32. How important would you say each of the following factors are in deciding whether to make an arrest in a case of physical abuse or neglect. For each category please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important:

	NOT	SOMEWHAT	VERY	
a. seriousness of child's injuries	0	1	2	(70)
b. age of child	0	1	2	(71)
c. sex of child	0	1	2	(72)
d. availability of physical evidence such as photos	0	1	2	(73)
e. availability of witnesses	0	1	2	(74)
f. ability of child to testify	0	1	2	(75)
g. family history of abuse	0	1	2	(76)
h. attitude of the alleged abuser	0	1	2	(77)
i. consideration of child's safety	0	1	2	(78)
j. recommendation of CPS	0	1	2	(79)
k. recommendation of prosecutor	0	1	2	(80)
l. medical report	0	1	2	(81)
m. Other (specify)				(82)

Q33. How important would you say each of the following factors are in deciding whether to make an arrest in a case of sexual abuse. For each the category please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important:

	NOT	MODERATELY	VERY	
a. seriousness of child's injuries	0	1	2	(83)
b. age of child	0	1	2	(84)
c. sex of child	0	1	2	(85)
d. availability of physical evidence such as photos	0	1	2	(86)
e. availability of witnesses	0	1	2	(87)
f. ability of child to testify	0	1	2	(88)
g. family history of abuse	0	1	2	(89)
h. attitude of alleged abuser	0	1	2	(90)
i. consideration of child's safety	0	1	2	(91)
j. recommendation of CPS	0	1	2	(92)
k. recommendation of prosecutor	0	1	2	(93)
l. medical report	0	1	2	(94)
m. other (specify)				(95)

Now I would like to ask you about the training officers in your agency receive regarding the handling of child abuse cases.

Q34. Does the pre-service training your officers receive include training on how to identify and investigate child abuse/neglect cases?

NO.....0 [Go to Q.35] (96)  
YES.....1

Q34a. How many hours of training related to child abuse do they get?

LESS THAN 2 HOURS....1 (97)  
2 TO 4 HOURS.....2  
MORE THAN 4 HOURS....3

Q35. Did your recent in-service training include a unit or material on how to identify and investigate child abuse/neglect cases?

NO.....0 (98)  
YES.....1

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INTERVIEWER: ASK QUESTIONS ONLY IF THERE ARE OFFICERS WHO  
SPECIALIZE IN CHILD ABUSE OR SEXUAL ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS  
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Q36. How much specialized classroom training did the officers assigned to handle child abuse cases receive when they were initially assigned to the unit?

NONE.....0 (99)  
LESS THAN 2 DAYS...1  
2 DAYS TO A WEEK...2  
WEEK+ TO 3 WEEKS...3  
MORE THAN 3 WEEKS..4  
IT VARIES.....8  
DON'T KNOW.....9

Q37. How much specialized training did officers assigned to handle child abuse cases receive in 1987?

NONE.....0 (100)  
LESS THAN 2 DAYS...1  
2 DAYS TO A WEEK...2  
ONE TO TWO WEEKS...3  
MORE THAN 2 WEEKS..4  
IT VARIES.....8  
DON'T KNOW.....9



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Q38. In 1987 did any of the officers who specialize in child abuse investigations serve as consultants or trainers for other agencies?

NO.....0 (100)  
YES.....1

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INTERVIEWER: PRE-CODE THESE QUESTIONS AND SKIP ALL THAT  
HAVE ALREADY BEEN ANSWERED  
-----

Now I will ask you about formal and informal interagency cooperation in investigating child abuse cases.

Q39. Does your agency have a written interagency cooperative agreement with any local agency or does it participate in a multidisciplinary team for handling child abuse cases?

NO.....0 [Go to Q.40] (101)  
BILATERAL AGREEMENT.....1 [Skip to Q.41]  
TEAM.....2 [Skip to Q.41]

Q40. Does your agency have an informal interagency agreement with any local agency or does it participate informally in a multidisciplinary team for handling child abuse cases?

NO.....0 (102)  
BILATERAL AGREEMENT.....1  
TEAM.....2

Q41. Does this agreement cover only physical abuse, only sexual abuse, or both physical and sexual abuse cases?

SEXUAL ONLY.....1 (103)  
PHYSICAL ONLY.....2  
BOTH.....3

Q42. Which of the following agencies or organizations are included in the agreement or actively participate in a multidisciplinary team in your jurisdiction?

	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	
a. Child Protective Service	0	1	(104)
b. Prosecutor's Office	0	1	(105)
c. Other law enforcement agencies	0	1	(106)
d. Local medical personnel	0	1	(107)
e. Juvenile or family court (judge or probation officers)	0	1	(108)
f. School system	0	1	(109)
g. mental health/treatment personnel	0	1	(110)
h. private or community groups	0	1	(111)
i. Other _____	0	1	(112)

Q43. Does your agency participate in routine interagency or multidisciplinary team meetings to review problem cases that your agency participates in?

NO.....0 (Go to Q44) (113)  
 YES.....1

43a. How often does your agency participate in routine team meetings to review problem cases?

DAILY.....1 (114)  
 MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK.....2  
 ONCE A WEEK.....3  
 EVERY 2 WEEKS.....4  
 MONTHLY.....5  
 LESS THAN MONTHLY.....6  
 AS NEEDED BASIS.....7

Q44. Does the [written/informal] interagency agreement cover the following issues?

	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	
a. Notification of other agencies	0	1	(115)
b. Where to refer a child for medical treatment or exam	0	1	(116)
c. Coordination with prosecutor	0	1	(117)
d. When a joint investigation with CPS will be conducted	0	1	(118)
e. Periodic meetings of agency members	0	1	(119)
f. Specific responsibilities of each agency	0	1	(120)
g. Police investigations in schools	0	1	(121)

Q45. How many of the physical abuse cases that your agency actually investigates involve a joint investigation with CPS? (not just a parallel one)

NONE.....	0	(122)
A SMALL NUMBER.....	1	
ABOUT HALF.....	2	
MOST CASES.....	3	
ALL CASES.....	4	

Q46. What about sexual abuse cases, how many of the cases you actually investigate involve a conduct joint investigation with CPS?

NONE.....	0	(123)
A SMALL NUMBER.....	1	
ABOUT HALF.....	2	
MOST CASES.....	3	
ALL CASES.....	4	

Q47. Does the multidisciplinary team have a separate facility or a shared space in which children are interviewed?

NO.....	0	(124)
YES.....	1	

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Q48. Does the multidisciplinary team have a full-time paid coordinator?

NO.....0 (125)  
YES.....1

Q49. How effectively do you think the team functions in handling child abuse cases, would you say it is very effective, somewhat effective, somewhat ineffective, very ineffective?

VERY EFFECTIVE.....1 (126)  
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE.....2  
SOMEWHAT INEFFECTIVE.....3  
VERY INEFFECTIVE.....4  
NO OPINION.....9

Q50. What, if any, are the primary shortcomings in the operation of the multidisciplinary team? [SPECIFY BELOW] (127)

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Now I'd like to ask your opinion of the activities of other agencies and your relations with them.

Q51. Thinking about CPS referrals of physical abuse and neglect cases for investigation, do would you say they refer too few cases, the right number or too many case?

TOO FEW.....0 (128)  
THE RIGHT NUMBER.....1  
TOO MANY.....2

Q52. What about sexual abuse cases? Do you think CPS refers too few, the right number or too many of those cases?

TOO FEW.....0 (129)  
THE RIGHT NUMBER.....1  
TOO MANY.....2

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Q53. How would you characterize your relations with CPS, would you say they are excellent, good, fair or poor?

EXCELLENT.....1 (130)  
GOOD.....2  
FAIR.....3  
POOR.....4

Q53a. What, if any, are the major sources of problems or friction?

(131)

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Q54. Does the prosecutor's office have a special unit or single individual assigned to handling all child abuse cases?

NO.....0 (132)  
YES.....1

Q55. About what proportion of the closed investigations of physical abuse or neglect cases in 1987 were accepted for prosecution? [IF UNKNOWN CODE 999]

\_\_\_\_\_ (133-135)

Q56. About what proportion of the closed investigations of sexual abuse cases were accepted for prosecution? [IF UNKNOWN CODE 999]

\_\_\_\_\_ (136-138)

Q57. How would you characterize your relations with the local prosecutor, would you say they are excellent, good, fair or poor?

EXCELLENT.....1 (139)  
GOOD.....2  
FAIR.....3  
POOR.....4

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57a. What, if any, are the major sources of friction or problems with your relations with the prosecutor?

\_\_\_\_\_ (140)  
\_\_\_\_\_

These questions are related to your recordkeeping system and statistics on child abuse cases during 1987.

Q58. Does your department currently keep hard copy records or have a computerized system that has records on the characteristics of child abuse victims and/or perpetrators?

NO DATA KEPT.....0 (141)  
HARD COPY KEPT.....1  
COMPUTERIZED DATA...2

Q59. What about records of case clearance status, does your department currently have a computerized system that has records of clearance status or a hard copy record?

NO DATA KEPT.....0 (142)  
HARD COPY KEPT.....1  
COMPUTERIZED DATA...2

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Q60. One final question, please tell me what changes, if any, you would make in the way your department handles child abuse cases? [RECORD RESPONSE VERBATIM AND CRICLE THE APPROPRIATE CODES BELOW.]

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	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	
IMPROVE TRAINING FOR PATROL	0	1	(143)
IMPROVE/INCREASE TRAINING FOR SPECIALISTS	0	1	(144)
IMPROVE WRITTEN POLICIES	0	1	(145)
INCREASE INTERAGENCY COOP.	0	1	(146)
INTERNAL REORGANIZATION	0	1	(147)
MORE PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS	0	1	(148)
OTHER _____	0	1	(149-50)

**CONCLUDING CALL:**

Thank you very much for taking so much time to explain how your agency deals with child abuse cases. This information has been very helpful and I appreciate your cooperation. When the survey is completed, we will make the findings available to your department. If you think of anything important that you haven't told me, feel free to call me at 202-833-1460.

FINAL INTERVIEWER ASSESSMENT:

Q61. Indicate your assessment of the department's training materials on the basis of their comprehensiveness, instructiveness (did you learn thing reading them over?)

EXCELLENT/OUTSTANDING.....1 (148)  
FAIR.....2  
POOR.....3  
NOT APPLICABLE/AVAILABLE....8

Q62. Indicate your assessment of the of the department's written policies on the basis of how complete, comprehensive, understandable, and well written they are:

EXCELLENT/OUTSTANDING.....1 (149)  
FAIR.....2  
POOR.....3  
NOT APPLICABLE/AVAILABLE....8

Q63. Indicate your assessment of the interagency cooperation in handling child abuse in this jurisdiction on the basis of A) how clearly each agency's responsibilities are defined, B) how extensive the written agreement is and C) how effectively it is in actual operation from what you learned in the interview. (i.e., do they have an agreement just cause it is mandated by law or is it really operative? Do they just share information or work together?; if work together, how often joint investigations are conducted?; do they share a facility? have frequent meetings?)

EXCELLENT/OUTSTANDING.....1 (150)  
FAIR.....2  
POOR.....3  
NOT APPLICABLE/AVAILABLE....8

Q64. Is this a potential exemplary department? [EXPLAIN BELOW]

NO.....0 (151)  
YES.....1



ID \_\_\_\_\_

**LAW ENFORCEMENT HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE  
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM**

1. Please indicate the number of child abuse cases investigated by your department in calendar year 1987. If statistics are not available for calendar year 1987, please provide them for the closest available full year and indicate what that period is in the space below. If you use different categories for case dispositions, please indicate what they are or enclose a copy of your department's annual statistics on child abuse cases.

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Case Type	Number of Investigations	Number Closed	Dispositions of Closed Investigations		
			Unfounded	Exceptional	Arrest
Child Abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Neglect	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Sexual Abuse	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Child Sexual Exploitation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Note: For purposes of this study the following definitions apply:

Child Abuse = physical assaults (such as striking, kicking, biting, throwing or burning) that caused, or could have caused, serious physical injury to the child.

Child Neglect = Failure to provide food, clothing, hygiene, or other needed care that caused, or over time would cause, serious physical injury, sickness or disability.

Child Sexual Abuse = vaginal, anal or oral intercourse; vaginal or anal penetrations; or other forms of inappropriate sexual contacts.

Sexual Exploitation = use of child under 18 in prostitution, pornography, or other sexually exploitative activities.

Unfounded = Allegation found to be completely without merit.

Exceptional = Allegation found to have some merit but investigation closed without an arrest.

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# Appendix E

## Criteria for Selecting Exemplary Departments

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CRITERIA FOR SELECTING EXEMPLARY DEPARTMENTS  
FOR DEALING WITH CHILD ABUSE - Draft 3 (7/15/88)

1. Have specialized unit(s) with following characteristics:
  - a. Specialists have responsibility for both sexual and physical abuse (i.e., crimes vs children).
  - b. In large agencies, take proactive approach, (i.e. do exploitation cases [cutting edge of field]); in smaller agencies, consult on such cases.
  - c. Located in crime prevention or youth division rather than CID (detectives don't relate well to social services).
  - d. Well developed interviewing protocols that get data that both child protection and law enforcement need; seek information that goes beyond intrafamilial abuse.
  - e. Mechanisms for intraagency communication.
  - f. Child abuse specialists serve as trainers at own academy AND to outside agencies (acknowledged as experts).
  - g. Stability in unit and support system to prevent burnout and turnover.
  - h. Quick response time to calls; procedures that assure thoroughness in collecting evidence, avoid having witnesses talk to each other (prevent contamination)
  - i. Good victim support, referrals, continued contact with victim throughout processing of court case.
  - j. Computerized record keeping system so can track cases, maintain records, characteristics of victims, suspects etc.
  - k. Use videotape for training and selectively in cases.
  - l. Have place to interview victims designed especially for children and equipped with toys.
  - m. Have someone responsible for reviewing ALL cases that handled by CPS so can become involved in those that suggest a crime.
  - n. Immediate response when notified of case by CPS.

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## 2. Training

- a. At least 4 hours on handling abuse included in rookie training.
- b. More than 40 hours per year training for specialists.
- c. Specialist training is interdisciplinary (i.e. exposes police to forensic, mental health, child development and resources in community (NOT just legal) issues and is conducted with members of other agencies.
- d. training focuses on interviewing children, use of anatomical dolls

## 3. Unit/department statistics

- a. Investigate a high proportion of the cases reported and referred to them.
- b. High number of cases kept open (keep working on things rather than exceptionally clear them).
- c. High percent investigated cases with suspect confession.
- d. High percent of cases filed by prosecutor.

## 4. Written policies

- a. Clearly specify roles and responsibilities for case investigations.
- b. Regularly updated.
- c. Have protocol for dealing with difficult types of cases (e.g. day care, multiple victims).
- d. Include statement that interagency coordination is essential for effectively dealing with child abuse.

## 5. Interagency cooperation and contents of agreement

- a. Have well developed interagency agreement AND cohesive working relations with other agencies.
- b. Senior management of agency is involved in the planning and maintenance of the interagency agreement
- c. Agreement clearly specifies responsibilities for

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personnel in each agency.

- d. Clear understanding of when a joint investigation is to be conducted.
  - e. Agreement provides mechanism for interagency team or case review.
  - f. Frequent, routine prosecutorial review of investigations before seeking arrest warrants.
  - g. Includes medical system and hospitals/doctors trained in doing child abuse exams in interagency team.
  - h. Shared physical location for team.
6. Other
- a. Active community outreach program which is regarded as a basic part of law enforcement role in dealing with child abuse.

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Office of Justice Programs  
*National Institute of Justice*

*Washington, D.C. 20531*

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