

Child Protective Investigations Involving Foster Parents

Information Sheet

(for additional information, also see CFOP 175-12)

What is the goal of Florida's Child Protection System?

The goal of Florida's Child Protection system is to ensure that children are safe from abuse and neglect while doing everything we can to keep families together.

How do I know the person at my door is really a Child Protective Investigator?

The Child Protective Investigator (CPI) should present proper identification before entering your home. You may verify that the person is employed as a Child Protective Investigator by calling the CPI's local office or the statewide Florida Abuse Hotline Command Center's toll-free number at 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). The Child Protective Investigator and Supervisor's name and phone numbers are provided on the back of this information sheet. You are encouraged to contact the CPI or supervisor with any questions/concerns you may have during the investigation.

What is a Child Protective Investigation and how am I involved as a Foster Parent?

An investigation results when someone has reported a concern to the Florida Abuse Hotline Command Center claiming a child under your supervision has been abused or neglected. The incident resulting in the allegations of abuse or neglect may have occurred while the child was in the care of a biological parent, other caregiver, or while in your care. When such an allegation is received, state law requires that it be investigated by a Child Protective Investigator who will explain what the allegations are and your involvement in the investigation.

When allegations are reported against you or an adult member of your home, the CPI will advise you of the allegations and address them with you as state law requires. The CPI will talk to you and other individuals who may be associated with the child. You can help the CPI by being truthful and by providing information that is necessary to determine whether a concern exists that affects the safety and well being of the child in your care.

Note, state law specifically directs visits and interviews with the child, family, and caregivers to be unannounced whenever possible, which may result in your child being interviewed without you being present. The law also requires you to notify the CPI within two business days if you move or if your child's location or living arrangement changes.

You may video or audio tape your interview with the CPI, using your own equipment, if it is immediately available. An attorney may represent you at any point during the investigation. Even if you choose to delay your interview with the CPI in order to be represented by an attorney, the investigation will continue.

What are the possible results of the investigation?

When the allegations are not alleged against you or any adult member of your home, your involvement may be limited.

If allegations are alleged against you or an adult member of your home, it is possible that the investigation will reveal that there is no indication of child abuse or neglect and the investigation will be closed with no further action. The child protective investigation is required to be completed within 60 days, except for investigations involving a child death, missing child, and/or when law enforcement has an open criminal investigation. Investigations may be staffed by the CPI with licensing staff, case managers, law enforcement, Guardian ad Litem, Children's Legal Services, and any other parties with pertinent information relating to the investigation. The

recommendations of the staffing will be forwarded to the supervising agency's licensing staff which may result in a corrective action plan, or suspension or revocation of your foster parent license. If the CPI determines that it is in the best interest of the child's safety and well being, the child may be removed from your care.

If you have any questions, you may contact the CPI or CPI Supervisor below.

Child Protective Investigator: _____

Telephone Number: _____

CPI Supervisor: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Office Address: _____

Intake Number: _____

Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, Inc. Support Team (F.A.S.T.) is available to provide support to a foster parent when an allegation has been or might be brought against him or her. You may contact F.A.S.T. at 1-800-327-8119 or fast@floridafapa.org