



New Jersey Child Protective Services Investigative Practice 2013 Assessment

A Report by the Office of Performance Management and Accountability

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Commissioner**

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REVIEW OF NEW JERSEY CPS INVESTIGATIVE PRACTICE

I. Introduction and Purpose of the Review

This review was conducted to assess the overall quality of the Department of Children and Families' (DCF's), Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) investigative case practice when fulfilling its statutorily mandated role of investigating reports of child abuse and neglect in the State of New Jersey. DCF is the identified child protection agency for the state with responsibility for investigating alleged child abuse and/or neglect, and taking necessary actions to assure the safety of the State's children and youth.

A child abuse/neglect investigation is defined to begin at the point of assignment from the NJ State Central Registry (SCR) to the county Local Office and conclude with the approval of that investigation by the responsible supervisor.¹ Decisions are made to open/maintain or close a family's DCP&P case following an investigation based upon levels of risk to the child(ren) in the home and/or the service needs of the family. The investigations in this review included a variety of allegation types, levels of complexity, final findings and case dispositions extracted from each of the 46 DCP&P Local Offices. These details will be discussed in greater detail later in the report.

In September 2011, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, serving as the court-appointed monitor of the New Jersey's child welfare system pursuant to the federal class action lawsuit Charlie and Nadine H. v. Christie reported on a similar survey conducted earlier that year designed to assess progress in meeting certain outcomes established by the Modified Settlement Agreement (MSA)². In many respects, this report provides valuable updated information on data collected in 2011. This review and report, while done in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Social Policy, are not solely intended as an MSA progress report but rather as an assessment of the identified strengths as well as the areas needing improvement in current investigative practice.

Generally following the sequence of the investigative process, the review assessed DCP&P investigative practice in such areas as:

- Pre and Post Investigation Caseworker-Supervisory Conferencing. DCP&P policy requires caseworkers and supervisors to conference investigations prior to a field response, after the initial contacts, and at the conclusion of the investigation in order to ensure a complete and thorough investigative process and sound decision-making.
- Meeting the response times assigned to an investigation by SCR. Caseworkers must see or interview alleged victim children within specific time frames or demonstrate diligent efforts to do so.
- Collecting all relevant information from child victims, family members, the historical record, community persons, the reporter(s), agency professionals and others in a timely manner in order to arrive at a valid finding and effective case resolution. Through interviews and collateral contacts, the totality of available information must be integrated into Risk, Safety and Needs assessments to inform decisions about whether and how children can remain safely in their homes as well as provide information for short and long-term case planning.

¹ The Office of Performance Management and Accountability published a qualitative report on the NJ State Central Registry in July 2012.

² The full text of the MSA can be found at http://www.nj.gov/dcf/documents/home/Modified_Settlement_Agreement_7_17_06.pdf

- Linking families with appropriate services to mitigate the current crisis and minimize the probability of a re-occurrence. When family needs are identified, the caseworker must attempt to address them either through direct DCP&P service provision or referral to a more appropriate community provider.
- Notifying the family of the results of the investigation. Timely notification of the results of the investigation establishes clarity of purpose while soliciting partnership with the family to protect children as well as satisfying due process concerns.
- Making appropriate case decisions. Children’s safety must be assured. Families whose circumstances are deemed to place a child at unacceptable risk of abuse and/or neglect and who need intervention must receive the appropriate level of intervention including but not limited to customized and effective case management, referrals to DCF resources and external professionals and the involvement of the Court as needed.

The review and report is based upon information documented in either the written case record or electronically captured within NJ SPIRIT³. While other casework information may exist, it is not reflected in this report’s findings and conclusions.

Organization of the Report

The remainder of the report is organized in five sections:

Section II: Summary of Key Findings

Section III: Methodology

Section IV: Findings

Section V: New Developments

Section VI: Recommendations

Appendix A: Review Instrument

³ NJ SPIRIT is the DCP&P comprehensive, automated case management tool that integrates various aspects of case practice in a single statewide system, including intake, investigation, case planning, case recording, resource management, service delivery tracking, and financial management.

II. Summary of Key Findings

This review captured the results of a statistically valid sample of 324⁴ child protective service (CPS) investigations assigned to DCF Local Offices between September 16 and 29, 2012 involving 688 children.

In 112 investigations (35%⁵), the investigation was the first involvement that the family had with DCP&P. In 84 investigations (26%), families were already receiving DCP&P services when a new report was made to the SCR. Seventy-four (23%) investigations involved families that were previously involved in an investigation or had previously received DCP&P case management services but whose cases were closed. Fifty-four investigations (17%) involved families that had a previous history with DCP&P but were never investigated or received permanency services⁶.

The results of this review reflect the following findings in DCP&P investigative case practice.

- **Reviewers completely or partially agreed with the finding in 95 percent of the investigations.** Based upon the information reviewed, the reviewers found that the decision to *substantiate* the allegation(s) or determine the allegation to be *unfounded* was accurate in the majority of the investigations.
- **Caseworkers met the required response time, contacting alleged child victims in 93 percent of the investigations.** Policy requires that the alleged child victims be contacted, or diligent efforts made to do so (“Good Faith Efforts”), within either the *Immediate* or *24-hour* timeframe assigned by SCR. There were 518 alleged victims in the investigations reviewed; 81% were seen within the required time frame and in 12% of the cases, “Good Faith Efforts” were made.
- **Safety Assessments were completed in 100 percent of investigations.** Following the initial contact with the family, caseworkers are required to assess the child(ren)’s safety on a three tier scale: Safe; Safety Protection Plan Required (meaning that the children may remain in their home conditionally) and; Unsafe/Removal Required. Reviewers agreed with the SDM® Safety Assessment decisions in 90 percent of investigations.
- **Risk Assessments were completed in 100 percent of investigations.** Prior to concluding an investigation, the caseworker must formally assess the level of risk present that may contribute to abuse or neglect in the future. Additionally, reviewers agreed with the Structured Decision Making (SDM®) Initial Risk Assessment scores finding for the family in 86 percent of investigations.
- **DCP&P made completely diligent efforts to provide and/or arrange for appropriate services for the family to protect the children and/or prevent entry into foster care in 74 percent of the investigations.** This was found to have occurred **partially in 17 percent of the investigations.** Reflecting the core mission of the agency, this result confirms that DCP&P is substantially meeting its obligation as the designated State child protection and child welfare organization in serving the families of New Jersey.
- **Pre-investigation caseworker/supervisor conferences took place in 86 percent of the investigations.** Supervisors are required to strategize investigations with caseworkers prior to the field response with respect to taking immediate action as necessary, safeguarding children, planning participant interviews, coordinating with system partners and other tasks essential to completing a thorough investigation.

⁴ The review included one more investigation than was statistically required.

⁵ Throughout this report, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore totals may not always equal exactly 100%.

⁶ NJ SPIRIT may contain information that the family requested information and referral for a community service(s) (I& R), had a simple inquiry (Information Only-IO) or were the subject of a call that required no action by DCP&P (NAR).

- **A “Teamed Response” occurred in 86 percent of the relevant investigations.** Caseworkers are occasionally required to respond in situations that may be unsafe or where a family has a history of violent or assaultive behavior. Of the cases where policy would require that the primary caseworker be accompanied by another caseworker, police officer or other professional person, a “teamed response” occurred in the majority of investigations.
- **Caseworkers were successful with interviewing mothers of alleged victim child(ren) in 97 percent of the investigations.** Identifying and engaging the mothers of children is essential to protect children from further harm and to partner with them to resolve the identified issues.
- **Interviews with the father of the alleged victim child(ren) occurred in 69 percent of the investigations.** Investigators were not as successful making contact with identified fathers as they were with mothers. Non-custodial fathers may not be as readily accessible as mothers who are usually the primary caregiver. Both best practice and policy require diligent efforts to locate fathers, and engage them in the investigative process.
- **Child Strengths and Needs Assessments for all children in the family were completed in 65 percent of the applicable investigations. They were considered *completely reflective* of case information in 75 percent of the investigations and *partially reflective* in 20 percent.** If a family’s case is to remain open for permanency services following the investigation, an assessment of the needs of each child in the family is conducted and used as a basis to construct the Case Plan with the family. The reviewers found that the Child Strengths and Needs Assessments substantially reflected the information gathered during the investigation.
- **Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessments were completed in 71 percent of the applicable investigations. They were considered *completely reflective* of case information in 70 percent of the investigations and *partially reflective* in 22 percent of the investigations.** Paired with the Child Strengths and Needs Assessments, caseworkers are required to assess the needs of the child(ren)’s caregiver(s) in order to establish the ongoing plan with the family. The reviewers found that the Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessments substantially reflected the information gathered during the investigation.
- **In 49 percent of the investigations, caseworkers collected and documented collateral information during the investigation from relevant sources in order to arrive at an accurate investigation finding.** Seeking all available information pertaining to a family’s functioning is essential to a quality investigation. Additionally, once that information is obtained, the record must reflect the integration of that information into the conclusions and investigative finding(s). Reviewers found collateral information clearly integrated into the investigative process in 63 percent of investigations.
- **In 66 percent of investigations, caseworkers completed investigations within 60 days, as required by policy.** Supervisory approval is required to extend the time frame for good cause. Of the investigations which extended beyond 60 days, eight percent had evidence of supervisory extension approval. For investigations extended past the 60 day time frame, 20 percent had a completed *Case Summary for Closing* document as required by DCP&P policy.
- **Investigation findings notification letters were sent to the family/alleged perpetrator in 75 percent of the investigations and to law enforcement in 43 percent of the applicable investigations.** Policy requires that a notification letter be sent to the family/perpetrator at the conclusion of an investigation, and to law enforcement when there is a substantiated finding. The sharing of the findings of the investigation to the

family/alleged perpetrator is essential in maintaining communication, fostering family engagement and cooperation and meeting the Department's legal due process requirements.

Overall, the reviewers found that 253 (78%) of the investigations were either *Completely or Partially Thorough, Comprehensive and of Good Quality*. Specifically, 85 (26%) investigations met the *Completely* standard for all three indicators of *Thorough, Comprehensive* and of *Good Quality*.

III. Methodology

Reviewers

The review of DCF Investigative Practice was conducted from January 14 to January 18, 2013. The survey was performed in the computer lab in The Professional Center at DCF in New Brunswick, NJ. The review team consisted of select DCP&P Local Office supervisory staff assigned to investigations, representatives from DCF's Office of Performance Management and Accountability (PMA) and staff from the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). In total, 16 individuals reviewed cases, 15 primary reviewers and a back-up reviewer.

Training on Survey Instrument

A three hour training/orientation was held with all participants on the first day of the review. This orientation explained the purpose of the review, the logistics of the multi-day process and a review of the survey instrument and of relevant DCP&P policy. PMA and CSSP staff were available to help address practical, personnel and functional issues and were also available to provide technical assistance to reviewers throughout the process.

Sample

The review was of a statewide statistically valid sample from all investigations assigned to DCF Local Offices between September 16 and 29, 2012. Investigations conducted by the Institutional Abuse Investigations Unit (IAIU) were excluded from the sample. In order to effectively survey the complete investigative process from assignment to approval, only investigations completed as of December 31, 2012 were included. That number was determined to be 2,018 unique investigations.

To achieve results with no more than a five percent margin of error and 95 percent confidence rating, a sample size of 323⁷ was selected. The sample was randomized and divided among the fifteen reviewers. Care was taken to prevent DCP&P reviewers from having investigations from their own Local Office. An over-sample of thirty investigations was included to substitute for sampling errors or significant deficiencies with review material. A total of thirteen investigations were disqualified and required substitution: nine (9) were due to Sample Error⁸, three (3) involved families that could not be located despite very diligent efforts by the Local Office and one (1) involved an individual who was mistakenly regarded as a minor.

Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument was designed by PMA staff with input from CSSP. The collection instruments from the 2011 CSSP Investigations Review and the 2012 DCF Fellows Pilot Investigations Review were examined and components integrated. The instrument included twelve sections (*indicates a section not always applicable to each case):

1. Identifying Information
2. Intake Basics
3. Child Information (capacity to record information for up to 10 children)*
4. Information Collection
5. Law Enforcement*
6. Collaterals
7. Risk and Safety Assessments

⁷The review actually included 324 investigative samples and had no impact on the validity on the overall sampling/methodology.

⁸ These investigations were coded in NJ SPIRIT as "restricted" and were unintentionally included in the sample. Due to media interest or the exceptional confidential nature of the case, these investigations cannot be accessed in NJ SPIRIT without special security approval.

8. Conclusions
9. Extension*
10. Analysis
11. Strength and Needs*
12. Additional Comments

The instrument was pilot tested on December 19, 2012 by DCP&P Casework Supervisors and CSSP staff. Minor revisions were made to the tool as a result of the pilot.

Basic Review Methodology

Reviewer Reference Sheets which included basic sample and demographic information for each investigation were compiled and given to each reviewer to assist them in expediting survey completion. Reviewers were asked to read all the documents⁹ related to the investigation, refer to the electronic record in NJ SPIRIT for additional information, as needed, and then complete the structured survey created in the web-based application *SurveyMonkey™*. Each reviewer was assigned 21-22 sample investigations.

A copy of the survey instrument can be found in **Appendix A**.

Data Analysis & Quality Control

Survey results were analyzed using *SurveyMonkey™* and Excel. Quality control included a review of the first two and every seventh survey completed by each reviewer and, as needed, internal discussion on specific investigations during the course of the review. Of the 324 investigations, 68 received a full second review. Several questions allowed for explanatory notes and reviewer comments which were utilized to better understand the answers submitted.

⁹Hard copy documents requested from the Local Offices minimally included 1) the Screening Summary ; 2) the Investigation Summary; 3) Structured Decision-Making© tools; 4) collateral information ; 5) contact sheets; 6) closing/transfer documents; 7) findings letters; 8) court documents; 9) documentation of investigation time extension; 10) any other information specifically related to the investigation.

IV. Findings

1. Allegation Type

New Jersey's Allegation-Based System, comprised of 32 types of child abuse/neglect allegations, directs the child protective service response based upon the specific nature of the presenting allegation as initially determined by the New Jersey State Central Registry (SCR). Following assignment by SCR, a DCP&P Local Office initiates a field response by a caseworker. Additional allegations previously unknown to the reporter may be linked to the investigation as warranted. A single investigation may contain multiple allegations and require multiple findings.

Table 1 reflects the dominant 10 allegations in rank order with *Substantial Risk of Physical Injury/Environment Injurious to Health and Welfare* being present in 222 investigations (69%), *Inadequate Supervision* in 60 investigations (19%) and *Cuts, Bruises, Welts, Abrasions, and Oral Injuries* in 42 investigations (13%). The *Other* category includes the remaining 22 allegation types, which individually accounted for less than 1 percent of the total of all allegations. Twelve of the 22 allegation types were not noted in any of the investigations in this review.¹⁰

**Table 1: Allegation Type
n=324 investigations**

Allegation	Substantiated	Unfounded	Total	Percent in Investigations	Percent of all Allegations ¹¹
Substantial Risk of Physical Injury/Environment Injurious to Health and Welfare	33	189	222	69%	55%
Inadequate Supervision	6	54	60	19%	15%
Cuts, Bruises, Welts, Abrasions or Oral Injuries	1	41	42	13%	10%
Substantial Risk of Sexual Injury	1	14	15	5%	4%
Environmental Neglect	2	9	11	3%	3%
Risk of Harm Due to Substance Abuse-Caregiver or Child	3	6	9	3%	2%
Inadequate Food	0	8	8	2%	2%
Inadequate Shelter	0	7	7	2%	2%
Sexual Molestation	1	5	6	2%	1%
Abandonment/Desertion	2	3	5	2%	1%
Other	4	14	18	6%	4%

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

2. Child Demographics

Information on age, race, role in the investigation, living arrangement at the time of intake and educational status was collected for 688 children involved in the 324 investigations. The survey allowed for data entry of up to 10 children in a single investigation. No family in the sample had more than 10 children. Of the 324 families, the number of children in the family was as follows: 38 percent had one child; 33 percent had two children; 19 percent had three children; nine percent had four children; one percent had five children. Families with six to 10 children accounted for less than one percent of all families in the review.

¹⁰Examples of these include Bone Fractures, Child Death, Mental or Emotional Impairment, Sexual Exploitation and Torture.

¹¹ The total number of allegations contained in these 324 investigations was 403.

Age

As shown in Table 2 there were 688 children across the 324 investigation, 202 (29%) children were between the ages of 0 and 4; 190 (28%) were between the ages of 5 and 9; 151 (22%) were between the ages of 10-13; 145 (21%) were age 14 or older.

**Table 2: Child’s Age
n=688 children**

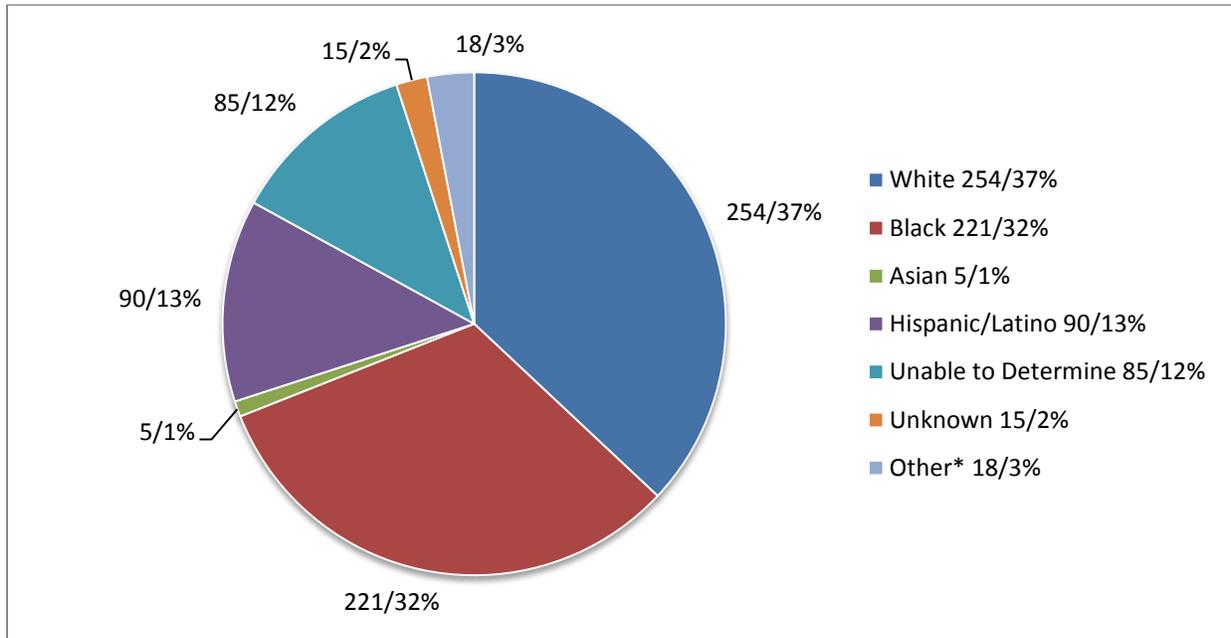
Age	Total	Percentage
0-4	202	29%
5-9	190	28%
10-13	151	22%
14+	145	21%

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Race/Ethnicity

The racial characteristics of the children referenced in the survey are described in Figure 1. It is evident that White or Black children account for the majority of the children at 37 percent and 32 percent respectively. In 14 percent of the investigations, “Unable to Determine” and “Unknown” was selected. As SCR often may not know this information upon referral, this may indicate that the record is not being updated following the field response.

**Figure 1: Child’s Race/Ethnicity
n=688 children**



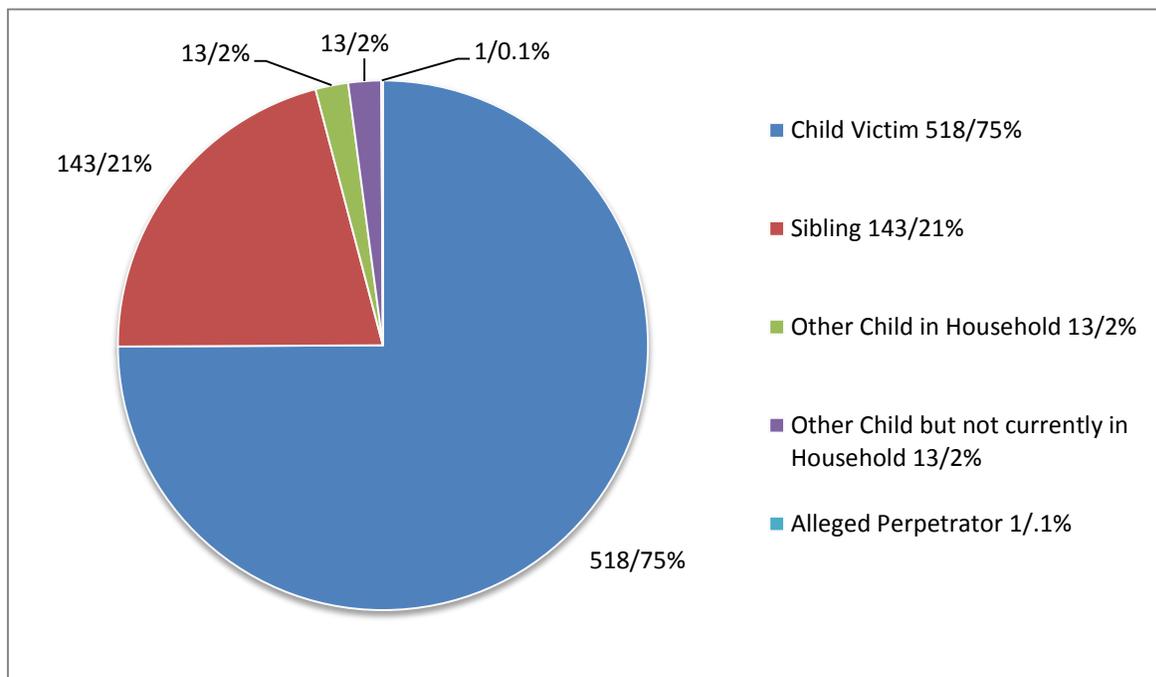
Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

*This category predominantly captured the “multi-racial” variant.

Children's Role in the Investigation

Reviewers were asked to indicate the role of each child in each investigation. For families with a history with DCP&P involvement, NJ SPIRIT (the State's automated child welfare data information system) automatically lists all children previously known in a case, including their last known location and status. SCR will edit this information upon receipt of a new report based upon the information given by the caller. Caseworkers are expected to update the record based upon their findings from the investigation. Often, additional victims may be discovered and added to the record. As evidenced in Figure 2, the majority of children (75%) were identified as alleged victims of abuse or neglect. While siblings in the same home are often assumed by SCR to be alleged victims, specific roles are clarified during the course of the investigation. For example, children connected to a particular investigation through familial relationship or past history may reside elsewhere at the time of the investigation and therefore would not be considered alleged victims but may be interviewed as collateral contacts.

Figure 2: Children's Role in the Investigation
n= 688 children

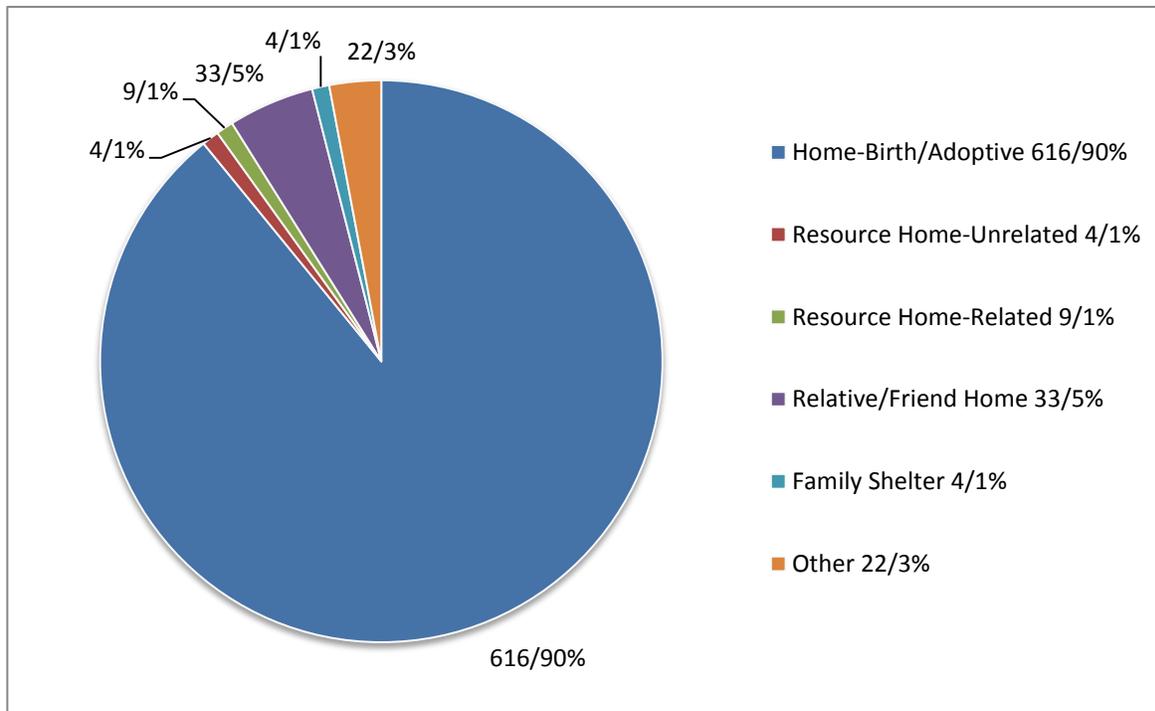


Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Living Arrangement

Most children (90%) involved in the investigations reviewed resided in their own home. The second largest grouping is children residing in a *Relative/Friend Home* (5%) followed by (1%) distributions of children residing in a *Family Shelter*¹² and *Related and Unrelated DCF Resource Homes*. While intakes involving children in DCF substitute care are normally referred to the Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU), the children in such settings in this review typically were noted for informational purposes only or as a supplemental or collateral contact /interview to complete the investigation but were not themselves the victims of child abuse or neglect. The *Other* category (3%) in Figure 3 includes responses of *Congregate Care Treatment Facility* (2), *Hospital/Medical Facility* (3), *Homeless* (1) and the *Other selection* (not otherwise specified). The open-text *Other* selections included but were not limited to *Unknown* (3) and *Living in a motel* (7). There were no children noted to be living in an Independent Living Program, Juvenile Detention Facility or Youth Shelter.

**Figure 3: Living Arrangement
n=688 Children**



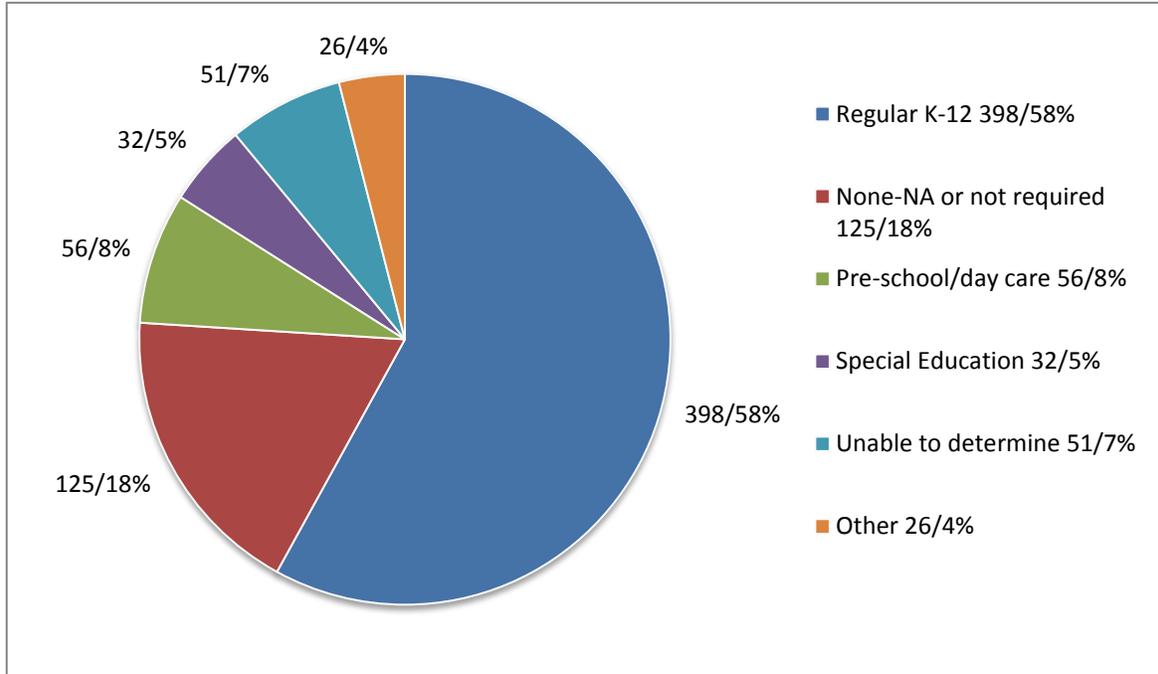
Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Educational Status

Figure 4 describes the educational status of the children in the sample. The majority of the children (58%) were enrolled in *Regular K-12 education*. The next largest group was the *None-Not applicable or required* (17%) which, when combined with *Pre-school /day care* (8%), roughly correlates to the 0-4 age group noted in Table 2. *Unable to determine* accounted for seven percent and may reflect instances of workers failing to update information. The *Other* category (5%) includes the less than one percent responses of *Home-Schooled* (3) and *School-age but not enrolled* (3) with additional *Other open-text response choices* (25) which included but were not limited to *GED* (3), *Unknown*(7), and *Homebound Instruction*(1).

¹² Family Shelters are operated under the regulatory authority of the NJ Department of Community Affairs.

**Figure 4: Educational Status
n=688 Children**



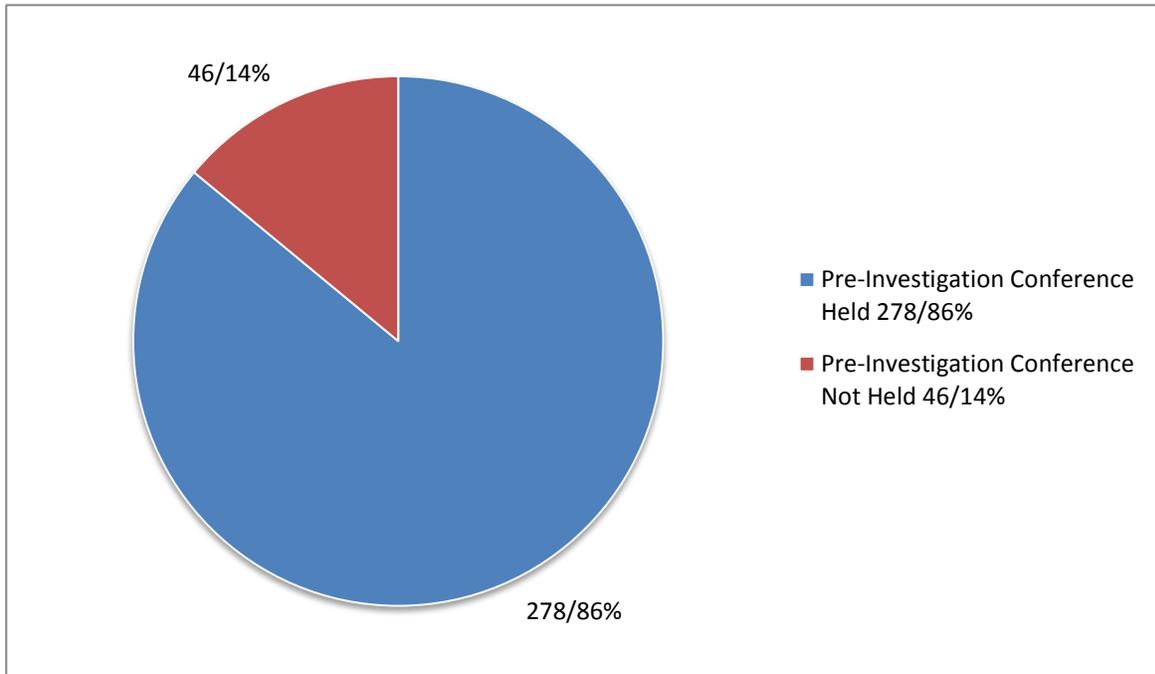
Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

3. Pre Investigation Caseworker-Supervisor Conferences

DCP&P policy¹³ stipulates that the assigned caseworker must discuss the case assignment with the unit or Intake Supervisor prior to making contact with child and/or family in the field. The purpose of this conference is to review the allegations contained in the referral from SCR, the family’s history with DCP&P and any safety concerns and to provide guidance to the caseworker for the initial response. Typically, these conferences, as well as the post-investigation conferences, are documented in contact case notes or, alternately, in the Investigation Summary. Figure 5 shows that a pre-investigation conference was conducted in 278 (86%) investigations.

¹³ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual IIR 308

**Figure 5: Pre-Investigation Conference
n=324 Investigations**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

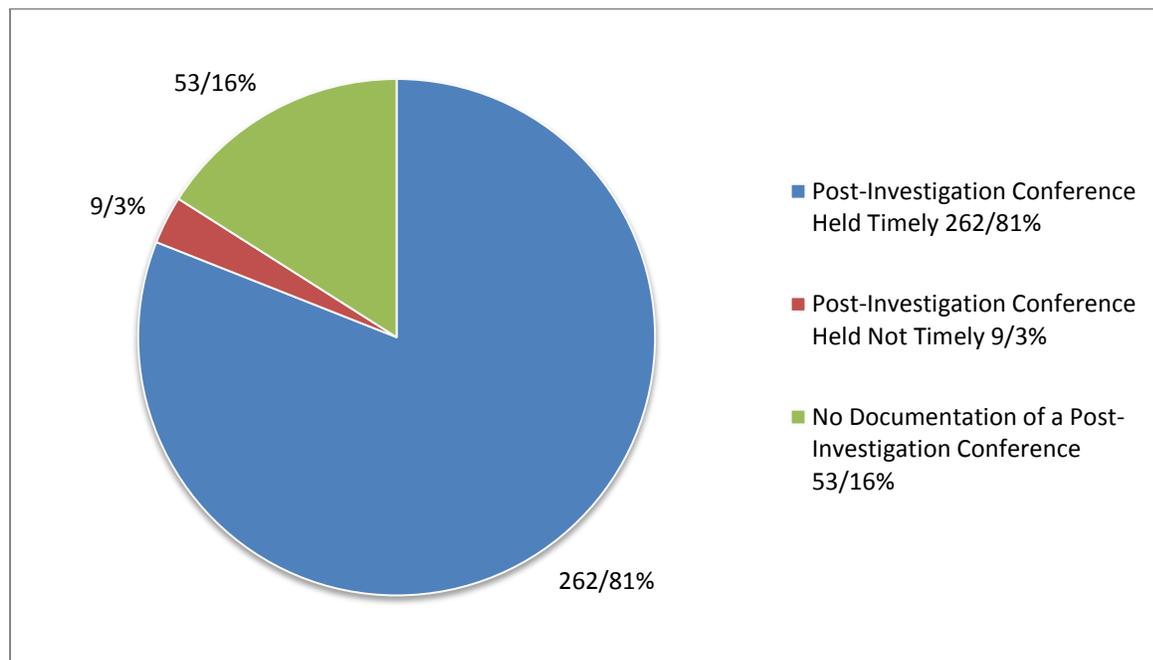
4. Post Investigation Caseworker-Supervisor Conferences

By DCP&P policy¹⁴, a case status update (post initial response) and final dispositional caseworker/supervisory case conference is required. Reviewers looked for documentation that a post-investigation conference was held prior to completing the investigation. Figure 6 illustrates that:

- A post-investigation conference was conducted before closing the investigation in 262 (81%) investigations.
- A post-investigation conference was conducted after the investigation was closed in 9 (3%) investigations.
- There was no documentation of a post-investigation conference in 53 (16%) of the investigations reviewed.

¹⁴ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual IIR 308

**Figure 6: Post-Investigation Conferences
n=324 Investigations**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

5. Application of a “Teamed Response”

DCP&P policy¹⁵ requires caseworkers to respond to certain field investigations with another caseworker, Human Services police officer or other appropriate adult/“Buddy” to ensure the safety of the primary caseworker and to facilitate a more effective field response. Those required circumstances include:

- Family/client history of assaults or threats of violence;
- Conviction of a weapons offense in the commission of a crime or disorderly persons offense;
- History of domestic violence where the alleged abuser may be in the home;
- Need to conduct a field response in an established high crime location;
- When conducting an out-of-home placement into a resource family home; and
- When transporting a child with known behavioral problems.

The policy further states that a caseworker is “entitled” to a Buddy upon request when case details are substantially unknown or the caseworker has been previously assaulted. A supervisor may elect to utilize a Teamed Response apart from the circumstances noted above when in his/her judgment safety issues are present.

Reviewers were asked to assess whether a Buddy was required for each investigation and if the record reflected that a Buddy participated in the field response.

- A Teamed Response was deemed *required* in 116 (36%) of the 324 investigations. A Buddy *participated* in 100 (31%) of all the investigations reviewed or in 86 percent of the investigations where a Teamed Response was required.

¹⁵ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II A 1405 dated 5/10/2010.

6. Investigation Response Time

The SCR screener assigns a time period within which the caseworker must either see or make good faith efforts to see all children named as a alleged victims. Two choices are available and are determined based upon such factors as imminent risk of further harm separate from the initial allegation, request by law enforcement or other professionals to intervene, or preservation of evidence. An *Immediate* response requires a response no later than the end of the day of the assignment to the field office. An immediate response time is assigned to allegations when:

- Law enforcement requests an immediate response;
- A child has died due to abuse/neglect and a sibling(s) or another child remains in the home/under the care of the parent/caregiver;
- A child is a hospital “boarder child” or a drug-exposed newborn;
- A child, under the age of six (6), is currently unsupervised or being left alone;
- A child requires immediate medical attention;
- A child is being seriously physically abused;
- A child has suffered serious physical harm or sexual trauma, and:
 - a) There is reason to believe that a parent, guardian or caregiver may have been responsible, and the child’s immediate safety needs to be assured; or
 - b) Physical evidence may be lost if not immediately and properly documented.¹⁶

A response time of *within 24 hours* is measured from the time SCR assigns the report to the field office and is used for all other CPS investigations not requiring an immediate response.

The majority (73%) of the investigations in the review were assigned a *Within 24 Hours* response. The remainder (27%) were assigned *Immediately/By End of Work Day* timeframe.

If an in-person contact cannot be readily made, a caseworker is required to make a “Good Faith Effort” to make contact as defined below with the child victim(s):

- Make a minimum of three (3) attempts to contact the child(ren) within the assigned response time;
- Stagger the attempts to make contact;
- Attempt to contact the child(ren) at their current location and their home address; and
- Consult a supervisor if unsuccessful.

Caseworkers also supplemented “Good Faith Effort” requirements by employing additional strategies such as contacting law enforcement or school officials for more information as well as by searching Court or County Welfare computer data systems for possible family contact information.

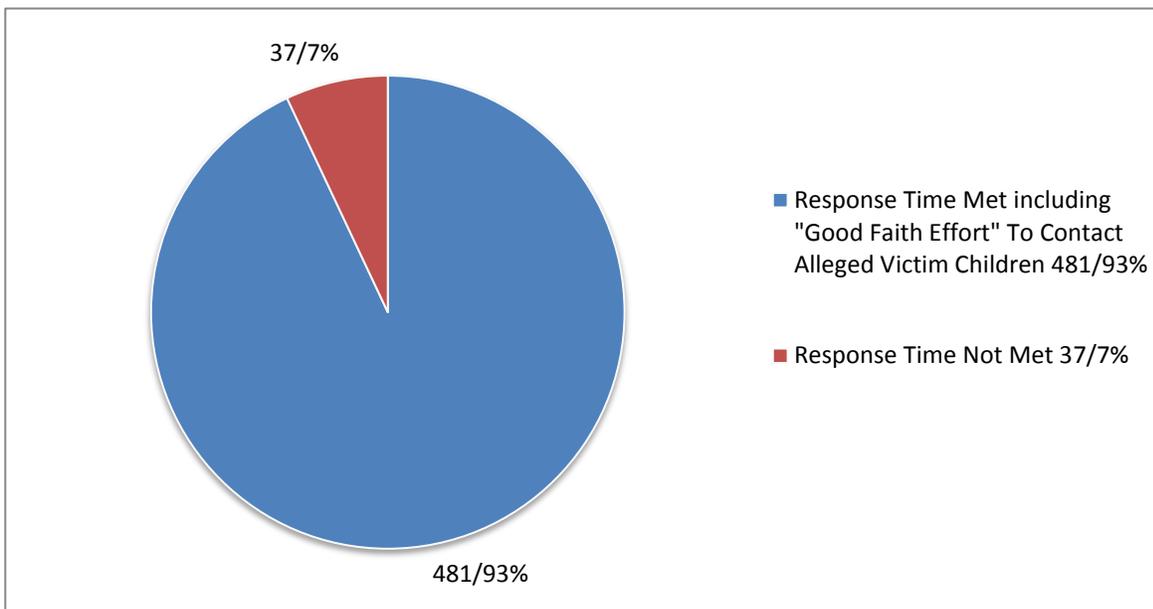
As reflected in Figure 7:

- The majority of alleged child victims (418 or 81%) were contacted within the assigned response time.
- “Good Faith Efforts” were conducted with 63(12%) of the children.
- Combined with “Good Faith Effort”, 481 (93%) of the alleged child victim(s) were either contacted or contact was attempted according to DCP&P policy.¹⁷

¹⁶ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II B 1400.6 dated 1/14/2008.

¹⁷ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II B 1400.3 & 5, dated 1/4/2008.

**Figure 7: Response Time
n=518 Alleged Victim Children**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

7. Interviewing Practice

Child

It is the preferred DCP&P practice to interview children who are alleged to be victims of abuse or neglect in a setting that eliminates factors of undue influence or intimidation. In many instances, interviewing the child alone is the best investigative strategy. However, on a case by case basis, due to factors such as the child's age, developmental limitations, parental preference or case characteristics, accommodations are made. For example, some children may not be willing to separate from their parent, non-offending or otherwise¹⁸, or make it clear that a sibling must be present during the interview. A common practice among school districts is to include school personnel in an interview that occurs at the school. In investigations involving Law Enforcement, a joint interview is preferred over multiple interviews. The strategy for interviewing child(ren) should be a component of the Pre-Investigation Conference and customized according to individual case circumstances.

Reviewers were asked to identify if children were interviewed alone and, if not, the role of the individual(s) present during the child's interview. Table 3 shows that 52 percent of the 518 children identified as alleged victims were interviewed alone. Of the 43 *Other* responses, the child was seen but not interviewed; primarily due to children being too young and non-verbal in 12 (4%) investigations. The reviewer was unable to arrive at a clear conclusion as to who was present during the interview in nine (3%) of the investigations. Other individuals present during interviews with the alleged victim child(ren) included but were not limited to *maternal grandmother (3), friend (3), IAIU investigator (1),*

¹⁸ Postponing the interviews to pursue legal recourse such as a Court Order to investigate is an option with non-consenting caretakers but is always weighed against the net gains in maintaining the child(ren)'s safety and completing a successful and timely investigation.

family seen together (3), resource parent (1), hospital staff (1) and other relative (1).¹⁹ In 6 (1%) of interviews the documentation indicated that *No contact was made*.²⁰

**Table 3: Individuals Present During Child Interviews-Alleged Child Victim Only
n=518 Children**

	Percentage of Interviews *	Number of Children*
Child Interviewed alone	52%	270
Parent/Caretaker	21%	111
Unable to determine	9%	49
Other	8%	43
School	7%	38
Sibling	6%	29
No contact was made	1%	6
Law Enforcement	<1%	4
Agency/Facility Staff	<1%	4
Child not a Sibling	<1%	1
Reporter	<1%	1

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

*Percentage and number will exceed (n) and 100 percent as more than one individual may be included in any one interview.

Parents

Good practice requires that interviews with a child’s parents occur during a child abuse/neglect investigation. This interview serves to notify the parent(s) of the investigation, solicit their cooperation in protecting the child(ren) and collecting information from them as to the dynamics of the family and the allegation(s). The mother or father of a child may also be the person named as the alleged perpetrator.

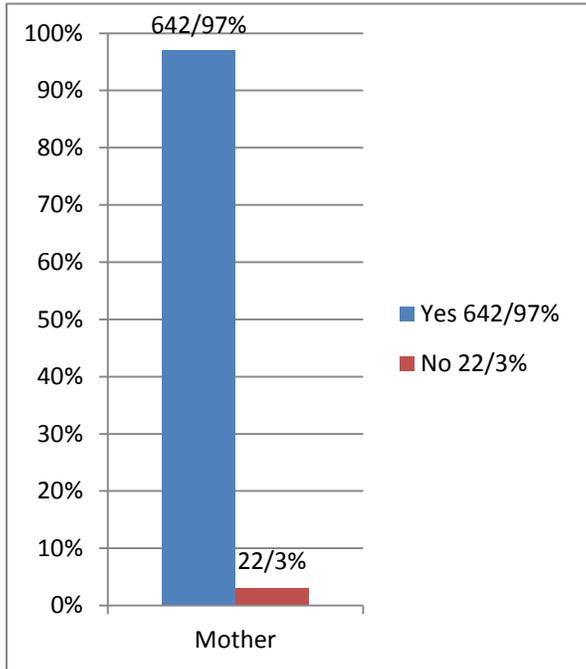
Figure 8 shows that initial contact with an available child’s mother was made in 97 percent of investigations. Figure 9 shows that the frequency of a successful contact with a child’s father was lower at 69 percent. In slightly over a third (31%) of the applicable investigations, there was neither contact nor a diligent effort to contact the child’s father.²¹

¹⁹ The *Other* selection may not be exclusive to other selections but rather a further explanation of a selection made, that is, duplicative. Upon analysis, contact with pre-verbal children were placed in the *Alone* category even though someone may have been present.

²⁰ As more than one answer could be selected, this may be duplicative of *Unable to Determine*. Further detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this report.

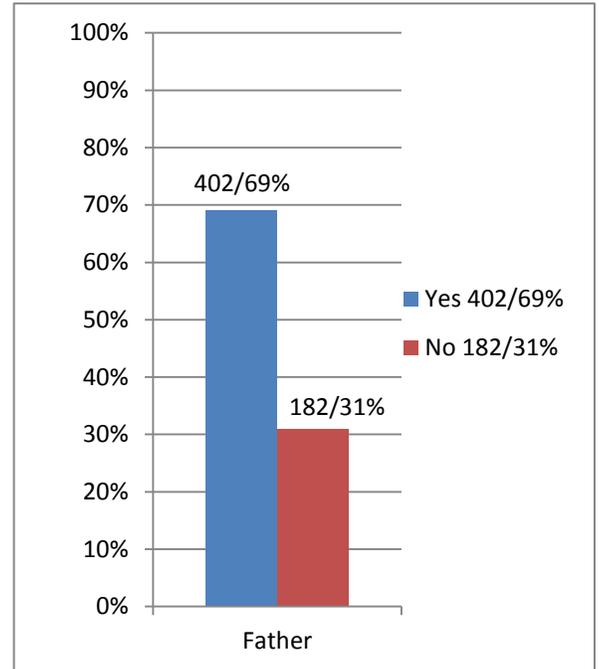
²¹ For both parents, a *Not Applicable* category was created upon analysis to allow for situations where contact was not feasible due to such factors as parent deceased, whereabouts unknown, parental rights terminated, residing in another country or the child and associated parent had no role in the investigation. Adjustments are reflected in the “n” values.

Figure 8: Successfully Interviewing Mothers
n=664 mothers



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Figure 9: Successfully Interviewing Fathers
n=584 fathers



8. Risk and Safety Assessments

Following the initial contact with the family, the caseworker is required to complete two Structured Decision Making (SDM®) tools in order to assess for safety and risk.²² The Family Risk Assessment is designed to obtain an objective appraisal of the likelihood that a family will abuse or neglect their children within the next 18-24 months. The Child Safety Assessment is designed to determine whether any child residing in the home is unsafe and requires protection, and, if so to determine what actions DCP&P needs to take to ensure children’s safety and ameliorate risk. That determination is based upon the conditions present during the investigation and the past DCP&P history with the family.

Safety

Reviewers were asked to note the Safety Decisions for the investigation. Table 4 shows that the majority of the investigations concluded with the children assessed as *Safe* (85%). A safety plan was required in 36 (11%) investigations where children were deemed *Unsafe*. In an additional 12 (4%) investigations, children were deemed *Unsafe* and removed from their homes.

²²Structured Decision-Making (SDM®) is a uniform, research and evidenced-based process designed to assist field staff in making important, fact-based decisions on safety, risk and family functioning. DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II A 2000 through 2006 and II R 303 and 305.

**Table 4: Safety Decisions
n=324 Investigations**

Safety Decision	Safe	Safety Plan Required	Unsafe/Removal Required
Frequency	85%(276)	11%(36) ²³	4%(12)

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

- Safety Decisions were made in 100 percent of investigations.
- Reviewers agreed with the Safety Decision in 291 (90%) investigations.

In the 33 (10%) of the investigations where there was disagreement with the Safety Decision, 25 (75%) were investigations in which the reviewer felt a Safety Protection Plan should have been implemented.

Some other reasons for disagreement with the Safety Decision included:

“Mother recently attempted suicide in front of her children and the older son had to call the uncle for help; a safety plan should have been put in place in the event the mother was feeling overwhelmed.”

“NO. Further assessment should have been done prior to assessing the children were SAFE. A DAG conference should have been conducted, especially with the case history indicating BM has violent behaviors and law enforcement has been out to the home as a result and arrested within a year.”

“A safety plan should have been put in place based on the past DV, current allegations, disclosures from the children, and the worker's witness to yelling between the boyfriend/paramour and the children.”

Taking into account all (45) Safety Protection Plans, whether they were required by policy or not, the reviewers concluded that 42 (93%) were *Timely*, 36 (80%) were *Realistic* and 33 (73%) were *Appropriate*.

Risk

The Risk Assessment assesses a family's circumstances and determines whether the level of risk of children maltreatment is low, moderate, high or very high for child maltreatment. Reviewers were asked to note the Family Risk Assessment scores and based on the documentation in the record, determine if they agreed. Table 5 shows that most (45%) of the risk scores were in the *Moderate* range.

**Table 5: Risk Scores
n=324 Investigations**

Risk Score	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Frequency	22% (72)	45% (145)	32%(103)	1% (4)

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

²³ While a *Safety Protection Plan Required* was the Safety Decision in 36 investigations, 45 Safety Plans were created, suggesting that nine (9) plans were not required by policy but offered as enhanced casework by the caseworker.

- Risk Assessments were completed in 100 percent of investigations.
- Reviewers agreed with the assigned Risk Level in 280 (86%) investigations.

Some representative reasons for reviewer disagreement of Risk Level included:

“Based in (sic) my review, this should have scored as high. The number of past referrals for neglect was answered incorrectly as were other questions.”

“At minimum, two risk factors were not selected that should have been. These would have increased the risk score by one in the risk section and one in the abuse section.”

“Risk score is too high based on documentation: -no indication of mother’s prior or current substance abuse -unclear about mental health (no indication or contact with collateral, no bizarre behavior or suggestion of MH issue...) -no DV as scored on the supplemental risk assessment form.”

9. Collection of Information Including Collaterals and History during an Investigation

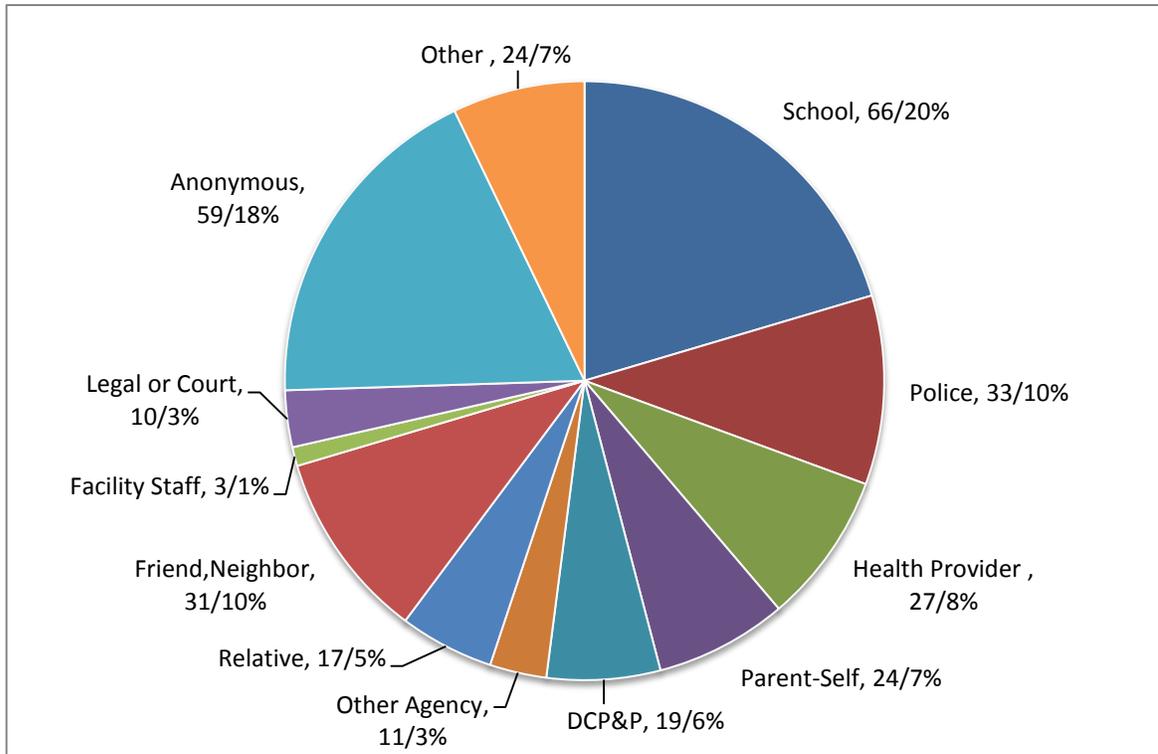
The foundation of a strong investigation is built upon factual, historical case information and the collection of information from any source which may expand and clarify the understanding of how the family functions.²⁴ This begins at SCR with automated DCP&P case history retrieval from NJ SPIRIT and continues with the caseworker who may conduct the following:

- a. **Conferencing with a previous caseworker as available.** If a family had a DCP&P history active within six months of the current investigation²⁵, the caseworker should seek information from the previous caseworker(s). This circumstance was found to be applicable in 113 (35%) investigations. Of those 113 investigations, there was documentation that conferencing with the previous caseworker occurred in 55 (49%) investigations.
- b. **Thoroughly reviewing the documented DCP&P history.** Of the 324 total investigations, 229 (71%) were reported to have had some DCP&P history, even though services may not have been offered or required and the documented history may only exist in the electronic record. In those investigations where there was history to review, the documentation reflected that this review was performed in 203 (89%) investigations.
- c. **Contacting CPS authorities in other states or US political jurisdictions.** If the family or the alleged perpetrator recently resided in another state or US political jurisdiction, the caseworker should contact the child protective services agency in that jurisdiction to obtain any information that the agency may have on the family or alleged perpetrator. In this review, this was applicable to 31 families and 21 alleged perpetrators. The reviewers concluded that the workers contacted the relevant CPS agency for the family in 15 (48%) investigations and for the alleged perpetrator in 12 (57%) investigations.
- d. **Contacting the reporter.** DCP&P policy also requires that the assigned caseworker speak with the reporter when possible. Contact information for the reporter was available in 262 (81%) of the 324 investigations (see Figure 10). The caseworker documented speaking with the reporter in 177 (68%) of applicable investigations. In six additional investigations, at least a single attempt was made to contact the reporter but follow-up was not clearly documented.

²⁴ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II R 308, dated 11-29-2010

²⁵ While policy uses the term ‘recently closed’, it was agreed that this would be interpreted to be within 6 months of case closing to eliminate ambiguity during the review process.

**Figure 10: Reporter Sources
n=324 Investigations**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

e. **Obtaining information from DCF local resources.** Caseworkers have access within DCF to a range of professionals who provide consultation and assessment designed to identify and address the family’s needs for assessment and services related to substance abuse, domestic violence, medical and mental health concerns. Those professionals often include a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC), a Domestic Violence Liaison (DVL), a Clinical Consultant, Deputy Attorney General (DAG)²⁶, a Regional Diagnostic Center (RDC)²⁷, DCF Child Health Unit (CHU) and Human Service Police.

Reviewers concluded that in 202 (62%) of the 324 investigations, caseworkers consulted with designated professionals. Table 6 illustrates the degree to which the professionals were consulted. Within the 71 (35%) investigations where the reviewer felt that additional assessment and consultation would have been optimal case practice but did not occur, the resource recommended and frequency was: CADC (22); DV Liaison (27); Clinical Consultant (14); CHU (3); Regional Diagnostic Center (5); DAG (8); Human Services Police (1) and Adolescent Unit (1). In 122 investigations, no consultation was needed.

²⁶ Legal support is available to caseworkers through an affiliation agreement with the Office of the Attorney General.

²⁷ The Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Centers were legislatively created to evaluate and treat child abuse and neglect. The RDTCs provide training and consultative services, emergency telephone consultation, and are a source of research and training for medical and mental health personnel dedicated to the identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

**Table 6: DCF Resource Consulted
n=202 Applicable Investigations**

Resource	Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor	Clinical Consultant	Domestic Violence Liaison	Medical/ DCP&P Child Health Unit	Deputy Attorney General	Regional Diagnostic Center	None but 1 or More resource consultations Needed
.Frequency in Investigations	104 (51%)	6 (3%)	30 (15%)	12 (6%)	35 (17%)	8 (4%)	71 (35%)

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Note: Percentage and number may exceed (n) as more than one resource may be selected.

f. **Obtaining information from collateral sources such as schools, medical professionals, community service providers, and extended family members.** DCP&P policy²⁸ requires that information be solicited from relevant sources outside of the family household who, by virtue of their relationship with, or knowledge of a child or family, can reasonably be expected to have information which will verify, clarify or refute the presenting problem or allegation(s). These individuals are referred to as “Collateral Contacts”. During an investigation, contacts must be in person or by telephone. Decisions about the collaterals that are important for an investigation are expected to be a component of the Caseworker/Supervisor Pre-investigation Conference. Collateral contacts should be made by the investigation caseworker with discretion, taking care to avoid breaching client confidentiality and privacy of the family.²⁹

Collateral contacts with specified individuals are required in certain circumstances:

- If a child is in child care, the provider must be contacted;
- If the family has an allegation or history of family violence, substance abuse or other criminal activity, local law enforcement must be contacted.

Reviewers were asked to determine what collateral sources were necessary for the investigation and, based on the documentation, whether contact with the collateral was successful or attempted but not successful. Table 7 reflects the collateral sources most commonly sought, the frequency in the total sample for which a specific collateral contact was deemed applicable by the reviewer and the extent the caseworker was successful in or attempted to obtain collateral information. The *Yes* and *Attempted* responses were then combined into an affirmative category, meaning that those collaterals met the DCP&P policy requirements.

²⁸DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II R 801, dated 4/4/2005.

²⁹ Authority for requests for information are made pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.40.

**Table 7: Collateral Contacts
n= 324 investigations**

	Number Applicable	Yes	Attempted	Combined Yes/Attempted
Child Care Provider	64(20%)	33(52%)	1(1%)	34(53%)
School	264(81%)	208(79%)	6(3%)	214(81%)
Medical Professional	317(98%)	233(74%)	21(6%)	254(80%)
Mental Health professional	111(34%)	57(51%)	6(6%)	63(57%)
Law Enforcement Professional	236(73%)	171(72%)	3(2%)	174(74%)
Neighbor	95(29%)	21(22%)	2(2%)	23(24%)
Relative(s) outside of home	207(64%)	105(51%)	5(2%)	110(53%)
Substance Abuse Treatment Provider	111(34%)	62(55%)	7(7%)	69(62%)
Family Friend	72(22%)	20(28%)	2(3%)	22(31%)
Other	16(5%)	16(100%)	----	16(100%)

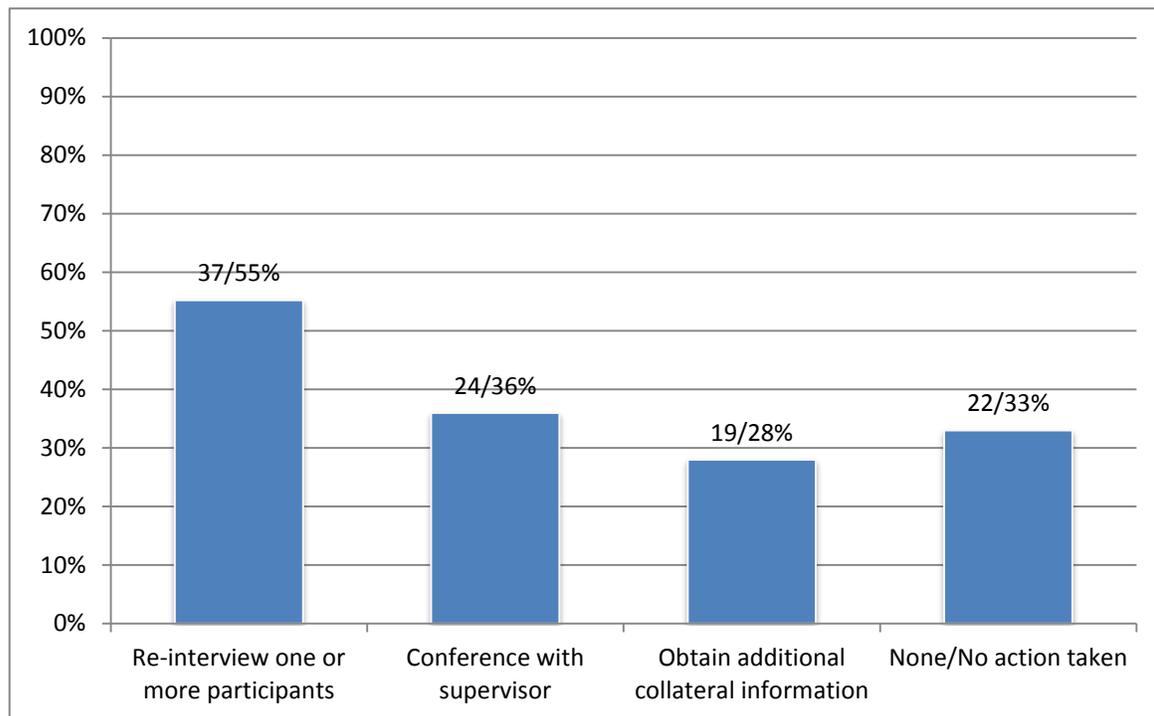
Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

DCP&P staff are more successful in obtaining collateral information from such sources as *Schools* (81%) and *Medical Professionals* (80%) compared to, for example, *Neighbors* (24%), *Family Friends* (31%) and *Relatives* (53%) With respect to those specific collaterals required by policy, for children enrolled in a child care setting, contact with a child care provider was only made or attempted about half the time (53%). For law enforcement, the required contact or attempt occurred only 74 percent of the time. The *Other* category represented collateral sources not otherwise categorized but conducted. Those 16 responses were comprised of *Child Welfare Agency* (6), *Utility Company* (3) and *Other Service Agency/Providers* (7).

- Reviewers determined that all applicable collaterals were secured in the affirmative in 49 percent of the applicable investigations. Contributing to this overall finding of the general quality of collateral contacts were the sub-totals of the results of effective collateral contacts related to: Speaking with previous caseworker (49%); Contacting relevant out-of-state agencies for information on the family (48%) and alleged perpetrator (57%); Speaking with the reporter (68%) and Making comprehensive referrals to DCF assessment services (65%).
- Additionally, collateral information obtained from all sources must be incorporated into the summary of the investigation and wisely considered when determining an investigation finding and plan for the family. Reviewers judged that all collateral information was clearly integrated in 63 percent of the investigations.

In the event that collateral information presented contradictory information to what had been secured, it is DCP&P practice to attempt to reconcile the conflict prior to concluding an investigation. Figure 11 shows the frequency of strategies utilized in the 67 (21%) investigations where there was contradictory information. No action was taken to reconcile conflicting information in 22 (33%) of the 67 investigations. Two hundred fifty seven (79%) of the 324 investigations did not contain contradictory collateral contact information and required no reconciliation.

Figure 11: Strategies Used to Reconcile Contradictory Information From Collaterals
n=67



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Note: Total exceeds “n” and 100 percent as more than one strategy may be utilized.

10. Involvement of Law Enforcement

In investigations of child abuse or neglect which rise to the level of a criminal matter, the DCP&P caseworker partners with law enforcement in the completion of their mutual tasks. Law enforcement in this context applies to any one of the following: Local municipal police department, County sheriff department, County prosecutor’s office or NJ State Police. Documentation indicated that law enforcement was involved with the investigation in 69 (21%) investigations.

- The caseworker or supervisor spoke with the law enforcement official in 54 (78%) applicable investigations.
- Law enforcement did not prohibit contact with potential witnesses, alleged perpetrator(s) and/or victims in 94 percent of applicable investigations. In only four (6%) investigations, due an ongoing potential criminal investigation, did law enforcement require that their interview/contact needed to assume priority over a DCP&P interview.

11. Linkage with Services

In addition to the primary purpose of a child protection investigation, which is to gather factual information about the circumstances of an allegation of child abuse or neglect, the investigation process, according to DCF’s Case Practice Model, is also to “begin intervention to ensure the continued safety and well-being of the child and improve family functioning on a longer range basis.”³⁰ That process may begin with DCF internal resources as described in section

³⁰DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II R 203, dated 12/30/2004.

IV.9(e) and expand to include a wide variety of community resources. Table 8 reflects the DCF resources to which families were referred for assessment and the frequency of their participation in that service.

**Table 8: Referral to DCF Resources
n=324 Investigations**

	Number Referred	Number & Percent Participated
Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor	112	84 (75%)
Domestic Violence Liaison	35	19 (54%)
Children’s System of Care (CSOC)	39	19 (49%)
Regional Diagnostic Center	17	10 (59%)

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

A family’s needs that could be better served by community resources should be identified by the caseworker and assistance given, if needed, to access those services. Reviewers were asked to determine which services seemed indicated for a family and if the caseworker referred the family to the service. Excluding the results where the services were already in place for the family prior to the investigation and where they were not indicated, Table 9 describes the degree to which families were referred to outside community supportive services from which they would appear to benefit. It is important to note that the parameters of this record review present limitations on the discovery of verifying information potentially contained in recordkeeping outside the documentation of the specific investigation.

It is evident in the table that *psychotherapy services, family* (102) and *individual* (104), and *substance abuse treatment services* (104) were dominant needs for the families studied. While, for example, substance abuse treatment was indicated in 104 (32%) of the families, the caseworker referred 77 (74%) of those families to a service provider. Similarly, while 102 (32%) of the families would benefit from *family therapy*, 35 (34%) were specifically referred to a provider. Documentation also indicated that when services such as *TANF* (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) and *WIC* (Women, Infant and Children) were indicated, referrals to link the family with the service occurred respectively in only seven (15%) and six (17%) of the applicable investigations.

These findings indicate that caseworkers need to ensure that referrals for necessary services are offered to families and that follow-through by the family with the service(s) is encouraged and documented.

**Table 9: Linkage with Community Services
n= 324 Investigations**

	Service Need Identified*	Documentation that Caseworker Referred
TANF	46 (14%)	7 (15%)
Food Stamps	45 (13%)	8 (18%)
WIC	35 (11%)	6 (17%)
Medicaid	42 (13%)	9 (21%)
Disability Services	11 (3%)	4 (36%)
Housing Assistance	38 (12%)	12 (31%)
Individual Psychotherapy	104 (32%)	59 (57%)
Family Therapy	102 (32%)	35 (34%)
Substance Abuse Treatment	104 (32%)	77 (74%)
Utility Assistance	20 (6%)	8 (40%)
Transportation Services	16 (5%)	10 (62%)
Clothing Assistance	14 (4%)	14 (100%)
Legal Services	26 (8%)	8 (31%)
Other**	16 (5%)	**

* Numbers will exceed (n) as more than one service could be selected.
 ** Analysis of *Other* indicated that 61 responses were qualifications/duplicative of selections in the fixed categories. Eight (8) were unique and included *Homemaker (4), Education Support (3), LGBT Services (1), Employment Services (1), Day Care Services (3), Food Pantry (2), Medical Services (1), 800# Helpline (1)*. Breakdown of Referral by individual *Other* service could not be performed.

Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

12. Investigative Findings

Of the 324 investigations, 44 (14%) had one or more allegations which were substantiated. Reviewers were asked if they believed the information documented supported the finding(s) made in the investigation. Figure 12 reflects that reviewers completely agreed with the finding decision in 239 (74%) investigations, partially agreed in 68 (21%) investigations and disagreed in 17 (5%) investigations. Results of a related question reinforce those results in that reviewers believed that the caseworker gathered sufficient information to make in an accurate assessment and finding in 237 (73%) investigations.

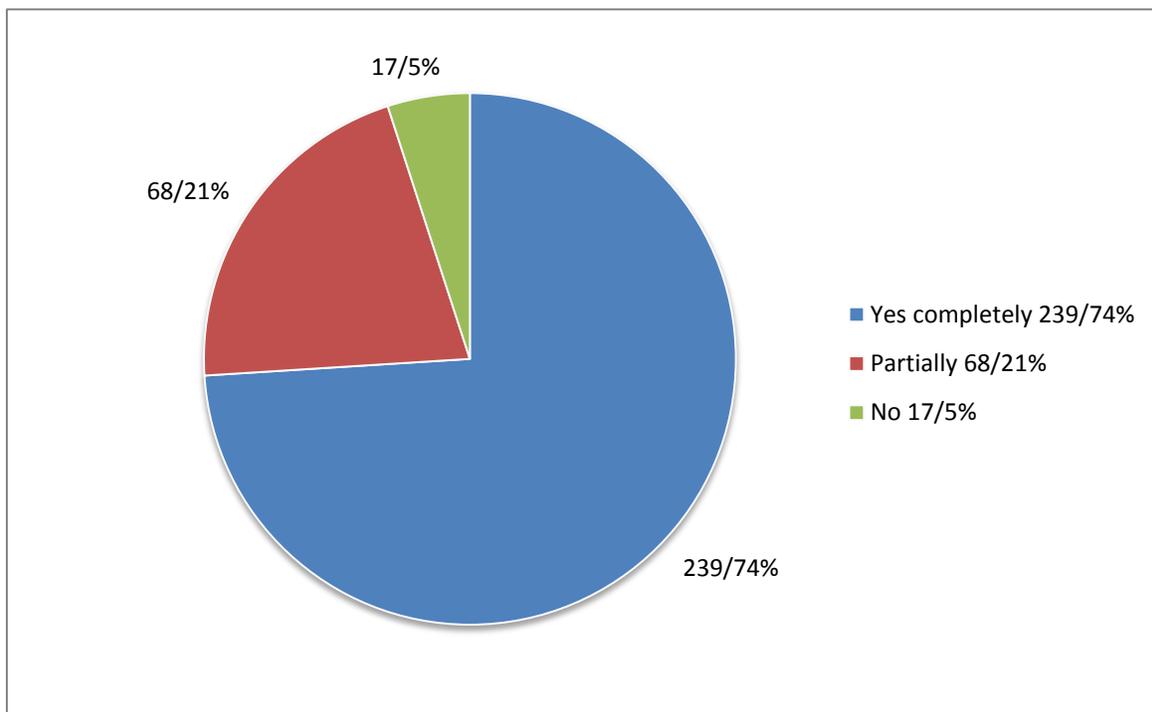
Some representative reasons for less than complete agreement with the finding(s) include:

“Worker mostly thorough but probably should have contacted pediatrician directly.”

“I believe that the worker adequately made efforts to come to a finding of unfounded however there should have been more information gathered from collateral sources which were available to this investigating worker that would have further supported the finding.”

“Many collaterals were not obtained, so a thorough assessment was not completed.”

**Figure 12: Finding(s) Supported by Documentation
n=324 Investigations**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

13. Timeliness of Investigation Completion

CPS investigations are to be completed within 60 days of assignment to the investigating Local Office.³¹ If that cannot be accomplished for good cause, the assigned supervisor may approve extensions of 30 days. Good cause may include but it is not limited to such circumstances as a delay in locating the family, inability to interview all participants in a timely manner or a request from law enforcement to delay the DCP&P investigation due to an active criminal investigation.

- 213 (66%) investigations were completed within 60 days. For the 111 (34%) that were not completed timely, only nine (8%) had a documented approved supervisory extension.

The same policy also stipulates that a Case Summary for Closing (DCP&P Form 26-57) be completed for those investigations that extend beyond 60 days. The form is used to explain:

- The current case status;
- The reasons for closing or transferring the case;
- The activities since the last case recording which were directed toward the case closing or transfer;
- The living arrangement and education/employment status of aging out adolescents.³²

The completion rate of 20 percent clearly indicates a need for policy reinforcement of this expectation.

³¹ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II R 308, dated 11/29/2010

³² DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures-IV Forms Manual dated 5/24/2010

14. Notification of Findings

Following the completion of the investigation, DCP&P policy requires that a letter be sent within ten days to the family, alleged/confirmed perpetrator and, if substantiated, to law enforcement, advising them of the finding(s) of the investigation and, as appropriate, subsequent actions to be taken. The correspondence utilizes standard language tailored to the needs of the recipient.

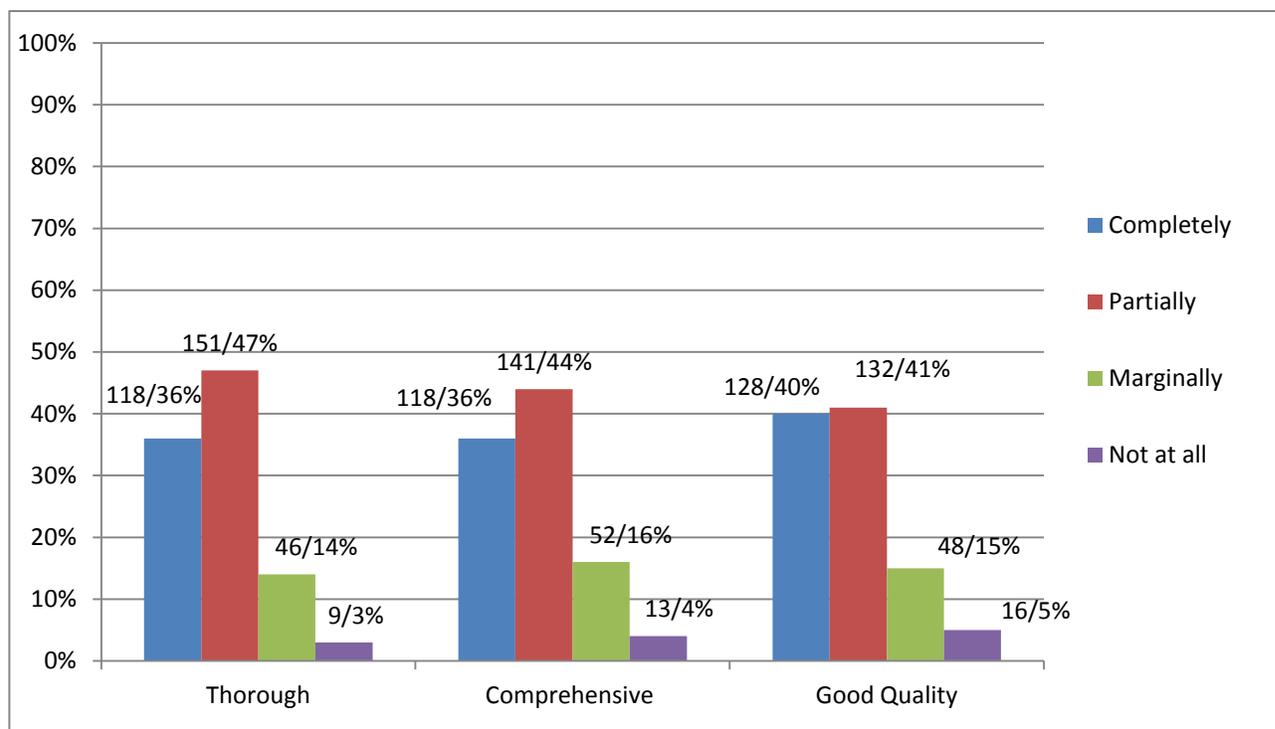
- Notification letters were sent to the family and alleged/confirmed perpetrator in 243 (75%) of completed investigations.
- Notification of a substantiated finding was sent to law enforcement in 19 of the applicable 44 investigations (43%).
- Notification of the disposition of the investigation was sent to the reporter in 35 (14%) investigations where reporter contact information was known.

15. Overall Quality of Investigation

Based upon their review of the components of an investigation and the documentation in the record, reviewers were asked to render a judgment on the overall quality of the investigation and to consider if diligent efforts were provided to protect the children, prevent placement into foster care and arrange for appropriate services. Figure 13 shows that *Partially* was the dominant response to all three criteria.

- Combining the *Completely* and *Partially* responses, the percentage totals for all investigations for each indicator yields: 83 percent for *Thorough*; 80 percent for *Comprehensive*; 80 percent for *Good Quality*.
- The number of investigations which met the *Completely* or *Partially* standard for all three indicators totaled 253 (78%). These investigations were deemed to be acceptable.
- The number of investigations which met the *Completely* standard for all three indicators totaled 85 (26%).

**Figure 13: Overall Quality of Investigation
n=324 Investigations**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

Representative reviewer responses include:

Completely Thorough or Comprehensive or Good Quality

“Investigator very detailed and descriptive in the report.”

“The investigator came across as being engaging and was able to obtain a wealth of information from the parents regarding their finances as well as their relationship.”

“Investigation was nicely done in collaboration with law enforcement.”

“Documentation of all activities was clear and well written.”

“The documentation reflected excellent interviewing and observation skills as well as thoroughness in contacting all collaterals.”

Partially Thorough or Comprehensive or Good Quality

“Very smooth reading and relevant information was gathered. Was hoping to see pediatric and some school collaterals to be in-person or telephone contacts.”

“Assessment of prior history was not incorporated into planning.”

“Partially thorough because worker should have contacted pediatrician directly for medical information. She knew name of the provider.”

“More clarifying questions should have been asked or supervisory consultation to resolve conflicting information from the SCR report and that of the bio parents.”

“The information gathered and investigator's actions were not clearly documented and thus quality of practice was hard to assess.”

“The investigator interviewed all the children, but for some there were no follow through questions.”

“There should have been consultation with the permanency worker in reference to collaterals or collaterals should have been completed. Also, the babysitter for the 1 year old was not contacted nor the reporter.”

“We know that the mother had a mental health history and that was not explored with her though the investigator did know that she had 7 prior unfounded referrals.”

“Parents are currently residing with other adults, there were no interviews conducted with these individuals.”

“The worker could have obtained more comprehensive collaterals from the neighbor, the babysitter of the child, and family members who were identified as supports during the investigation.”

Marginally/Not at All Thorough or Comprehensive or Good Quality

“No collaterals requested.”

“Fundamental concerns about child's emotional well-being not addressed.”

“Worker didn't interview all parties.”

“No documentation that children were interviewed.”

While reviewers determined that many investigations were complete, *the* majority indicated that missing or deficient components affected the quality of investigations. Reviewers often returned to the theme of investigations lacking sufficient information from collateral contacts.

Figure 14 reflects the reviewer's overall judgment on the diligence of DCP&P's efforts in protecting children and serving the family. In 240 (74%) investigations, reviewers felt that the efforts of the agency were *Completely* diligent and 56 (17%) investigations were judged as *Partially diligent*, yielding a combined outcome of 91 percent.

Reasons for a *Partially* or *No* response included but were not limited to:

“The agency did not do anything to support the mother with a plan in case she is feeling overwhelmed; since the investigation closed, the family has gone missing.”

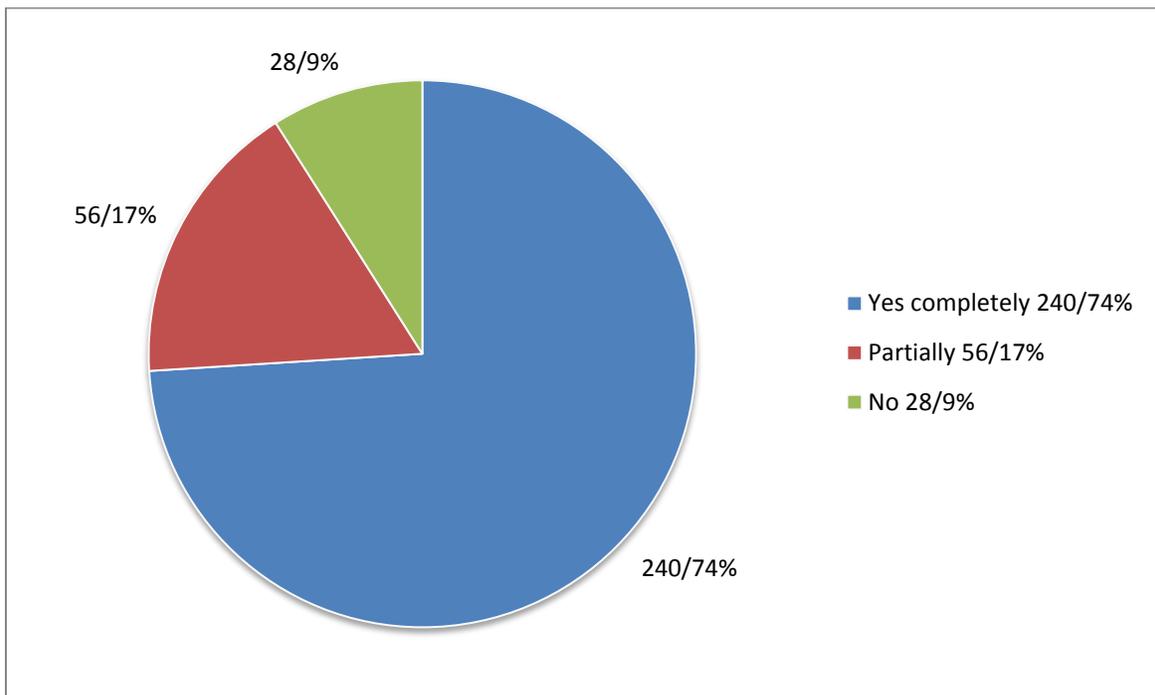
“Although it appears there are imminent safety issues during the response, the gross neglect in this family over the last 20 years is so glaring it is hard to say they are safe. This family has a documented history of lice,

roach and bed bug infestations that span 20 years-never completely resolving. During this response on this referral which was about bed bugs, the school reported that one of the other children in the household had lice again.”

“Review(er) was not able to find anything indicating that the worker offered any services to this family. The case was closed and in this reviewer’s opinion services were needed and at least short term intervention by our agency.”

“Mostly worker did very good job with this. The only outstanding pieces I see are need for help with child support and DV legal issues.”

**Figure 14: Diligent Efforts to Protect Children and Serve the Family during an Investigation
n= 324 Investigations**



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

16. Strengths and Needs Assessments

DCP&P utilizes two additional SDM® tools to provide services to the family when an investigation is concluded and continued agency intervention is indicated.³³ This “case opening” can take the form of an involuntary Child Protective Services action or a voluntary Child Welfare Services intervention. In either case, both a *Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessment* and a *Child Strengths and Needs Assessment* are completed and used as a foundation for the overall case plan development.

One hundred twenty three (38%) families in this review were recommended to receive permanency services following the investigation. Of those 123 investigations, there was evidence of at least one Child Strengths and Needs Assessment in 87 (71%) of the investigations. That number declined to 65 percent when asked if each child in the home had a separate assessment performed. The reviewers determined that 82 (95%) of all Child Strengths and Needs Assessments completed were either *completely* or *partially reflective* of the case information gathered during the investigation.

Reviewers also found that a Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessment was performed in 87 (71%) of the 123 investigations to be opened for services and that for 80 (92%) of those assessments the responses were *completely* or *partially reflective* of the case information gathered during the investigation. (See Figure 15 and 16)

Figure 15:
Completed Strengths and Needs Assessments
n=123 Investigations

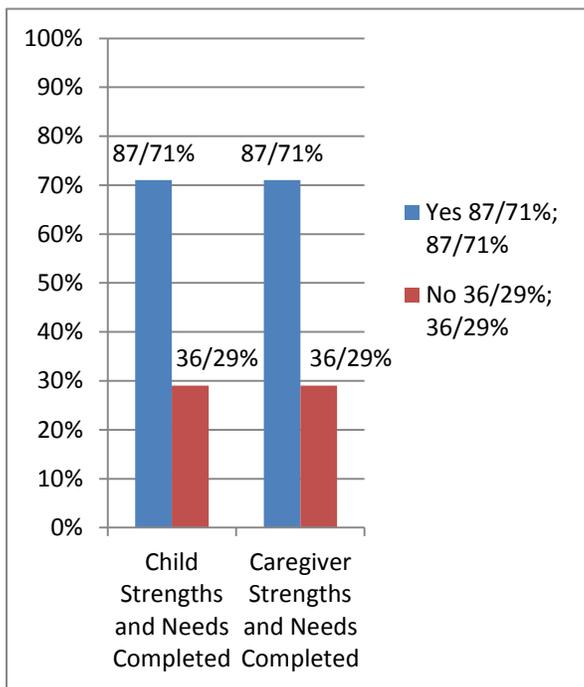
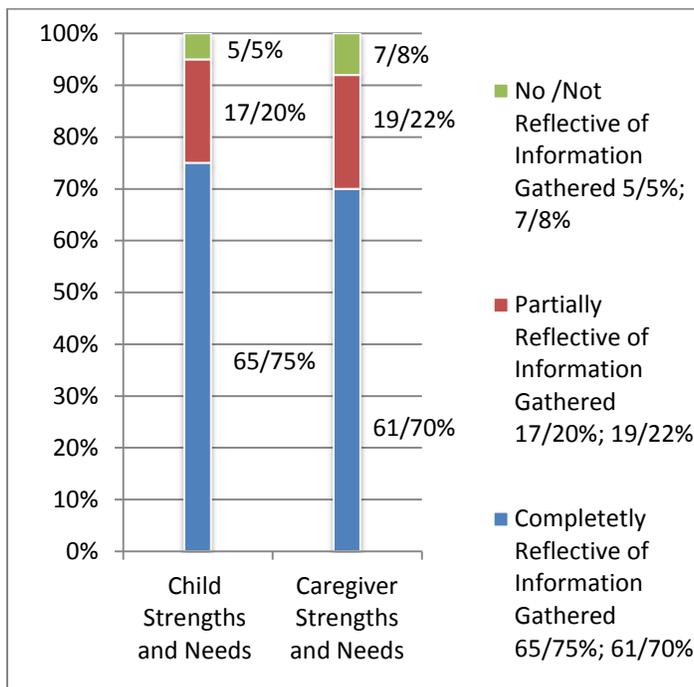


Figure 16:
Strengths and Needs Assessments Reflective of Information Gathered
n=87 completed assessments



Source: DCF Investigative Practice Review, 2013

³³ DCP&P Field Operations Casework Policy and Procedures Manual II R 303 dated 12/30/2004 states that the Strengths and Needs Assessments are required when an allegation undergoes a “formal investigation”, or when the decision has been made to establish a service case.”

If the Strengths and Needs Assessments were only *Partially* or *No* (not at all) reflective of the case information under review, reviewers were asked to identify the reason for that judgment. Reasons for a *Partially* rating were due to inaccurate scoring on one or more assessment indicators. It is noteworthy that a common reason for this was that the assessments were deemed incomplete without the benefit of information from required collateral contacts. (See section 9). Five (5%) of the Child Strengths and Needs Assessments and seven (8%) of the Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessments were found to be substantially not reflective of the case information gathered.

V. New Developments

It is important to share the changes that DCF has initiated over the past two years in regards to several important processes for evaluating the internal methods of our investigation practices and the overall practice of determining an investigation's finding.

New Jersey holds monthly ChildStat forums. The purpose of ChildStat is to encourage a culture of learning through self-reflective and self-diagnostic processes. ChildStat uses a case conferencing model where one case is seen as an opportunity to look carefully at practice, policy and procedure from a systems perspective. It helps identify specifically what steps can be taken to enhance practice with the case presented and help identify themes statewide. This intense examination is of one family that has been known to the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) yet recently opened for an investigation. ChildStats also are evaluated both through a written survey and verbal feedback with presenting office and DCF leadership. In addition to executive management, Area and Local staff, these forums are also attended by community stakeholders.

In April 2013, after this review was completed, DCF adopted a new regulation and new practices surrounding child abuse and neglect Investigative Findings called the "Four Tiers" which are as follows: *Substantiated, Established, Not Established and Unfounded*. In striving for more accurate ways of labeling reported incidents of child abuse and neglect, DCF created this four tier model to include flexibility in investigative findings through a more nuanced analysis of evidence. Ultimately, this use of critical thinking in the determination of findings will help insure the safety of the State's most vulnerable children and their families. All DCP&P Leadership, Investigative, and case carrying staff are in the process of attending a two day training on the Four Tiers and are provided with a desk reference for making a finding determination.

VI. Recommendations

The goal of this report is to describe the current performance of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) when conducting child protective services (CPS) investigations.

As discussed throughout this report, the review found many elements of good investigative and assessment case practice in addition to areas for improvement. Below are key recommendations for improvements to DCP&P investigative practice that emerged as a result of the review. DCF's robust quality improvement activities are a strong foundation to build on as DCP&P moves forward to ensure consistently high quality child protective services practice in New Jersey.

DCP&P needs to clarify through policy, training and mentoring for staff and supervisors some of the areas of the investigative process and practice.

These include:

1. Investigation activities, including convening and documenting pre and post investigation supervisory conferences and ensuring that a family's history with DCP&P are part of the investigation and appropriately reflected in investigation activities and decision-making.
 - *Conferencing:* DCP&P workers conducted pre-investigative conferences prior to initiating an investigation in 86 percent of cases reviewed, in accordance with DCP&P policy and practice guidelines. However, documentation demonstrated that almost 20 percent of post-investigative conferences that are needed to assure that appropriate services are in place and appropriately documented are not being held. These conferences need to be documented in the case record and used by staff and supervisors for follow-up and accountability.
 - *Prior DCP&P History:* DCP&P must reinforce through supervision and training the critical importance of reviewing and understanding a family's prior child protection history. A view of the past work with a family offers valuable insight to the family's current functioning, prior services/interventions attempted and assists casework staff in understanding patterns of behavior. It also offers a sense of prior formal and informal supports to include in the family's team as well as potential placement resources should removal be required. Furthermore, a review of a family's history with DCP&P can help casework staff learn about additional collateral contacts that could inform the current investigative process. This includes interviews with other DCP&P workers that may have had contact with the family as well as child protective authorities in other states or jurisdictions. This is especially important given that over 70 percent of the investigations in this review had prior DCP&P history. While there has been a great deal of attention paid to *Frequently Encountered Families* (i.e. those families with multiple referrals to DCP&P) further work is needed to concretize DCF's approach to these families. DCP&P quality assurance work going forward should pay particular attention to the extent to which investigations, particularly for families that have had prior involvement with child protection, sufficiently identify, understand and address a family's underlying needs in the course of the investigation and in subsequent service delivery.
2. Integrating collateral information into investigation decision-making.
 - Through supervision and training, DCP&P should clarify expectations and improve its practice regarding obtaining and integrating collateral information into investigations. Reviewers determined that investigators

secured all applicable collateral information in half (49 %) of investigations. Further, investigators collected and integrated information obtained from collateral sources such as medical professionals, teachers and others in 63 percent of cases reviewed. In short, collecting the information is a critical starting point and the information, combined with the prior history must be integrated to come to a reasonable understanding of safety and risk issues as well how to intervene and partner with a family. Collateral sources are also potential supports to the family during the investigative process as well as resources once child welfare involvement has ended.

3. Interviews

- DCP&P policy is not consistently applied in practice regarding interviewing both parents during an investigation. While investigators were successful in interviewing 97 percent of mothers during investigations in the review, only 69 percent of fathers were interviewed. DCP&P's ongoing efforts to more effectively incorporate fathers into case planning and services need to extend to investigations. Fathers engaged during the investigation may be on-going resources to the family after child welfare involvement. Additionally, the paternal side of the family may offer informal supports to the child/family and be valuable sources of historical information.
- Another policy that needs additional attention to improve compliance is the requirement to see children alone. The intent of the policy is to create a safe and comfortable environment where the child can speak freely about family dynamics and the home environment. Continued refinement is needed so that interviewing children alone or in the presence of others is consistently done as well as this being reflected in documentation. For example, when a child is school aged, interviewing the child at school may provide an opportunity to collect collateral information as well as interview the child outside of the home environment.

4. Strengths and Needs Assessment

- Additional training and supervision is required to ensure that each child requiring a Strengths/Needs Assessment receives one. Required Strengths and Needs Assessments were completed for every child in the family in 65 percent of the investigations. Caregiver Strength and Needs Assessments were completed in 71 percent of investigations in the review. Formally assessing the strengths and needs of family members is the first step to planning with the family. Using a strengths-based approach, casework staff identify strengths to build upon to address the needs identified.

Through quality improvement efforts and supervision, DCP&P needs to support workers to better meet timeframes and documentation requirements set by policy.

CPS investigations are to be completed within 60 days of the date they are assigned to the local office. While not every investigation can be appropriately completed within 60 days, the review found that over a third of the investigations in the review were not completed timely or did not have documentation of an extension. Further, the majority of investigations were closed without the required case summary documentation which is designed to collate in one place a summary description of the activities completed with the child and family. This summary is particularly important when cases move on to permanency and are served by another set of workers who need to know as much information as possible about children and families to best serve their needs. While the compliance with the 60 day time frame can be a challenge during high referral times, DCP&P should consider using data to determine if there are certain Local Offices that may need more focus on timely completion of investigations. Caseworkers should also be encouraged to submit investigations at the 45 day mark thereby giving supervisors time to review, return or approval them.

Through supervision and training, DCP&P needs to renew its focus on documentation.

With each new training and initiative, DCP&P must take time to make the connection for staff on how adherence to policy and documentation are both critically important. Training should include time to demonstrate quality documentation in NJ SPIRIT and elsewhere so that information is clear and concise and captured within Safe Measures. A fundamental part of good case practice is the documentation of actions and events that occur throughout a case, including in the investigation phase. While this area of practice is much improved from prior reviews, the review still found instances in which documentation was incomplete. Documentation is essential for case planning, supervision and accountability and is particularly important when there are repeat reports for families and children who may re-enter placement.

APPENDIX A

NJDCF CPS INVESTIGATIVE PRACTICE REVIEW DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Identifying Information

***1. Reviewer Number (Select your assigned number 01-16 from the drop down list.)**

***2. Date of Review**

Enter Date MM DD YYYY
 / / /

***3. Sample Number**

***4. Intake Date**

Intake Date MM DD YYYY
 / / /

***5. Investigation ID:**

Investigation ID:

***6. Local Office:**

***7. If this review can not be completed, indicate one or more reasons:**

NIA-Survey Can Be Completed

Sample error

Reviewer conflict of Interest

Other (please specify)

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Intake Basics

*** 8. Investigation Allegation(s) and Finding(s) [Select a finding of substantiated or unfounded for each allegation listed in the investigation.]**

	Finding
Abandonment/Desertion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bone Fractures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Death	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cuts, Bruises, Welts, Abrasions or Oral Injuries	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educational Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>
Failure to Thrive (Non-Organic)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head Injuries	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bites	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate Food	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate Shelter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Injuries	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lock-Out	<input type="checkbox"/>
Malnutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Neglect of Disabled Infant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental or Emotional Impairment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poison/Noxious substance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk of Harm Due to Substance Abuse-Caregiver or Child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Molestation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Penetration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexually Transmitted Disease	<input type="checkbox"/>

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Sprains/Dislocations	<input type="text"/>
Substantial Risk of Sexual Injury	<input type="text"/>
Substantial Risk of Physical Injury/Environment Injurious to Health and Welfare	<input type="text"/>
Torture	<input type="text"/>
Tying/Close Confinement	<input type="text"/>
Wounds	<input type="text"/>

*9. What was the assigned response time?

- Immediately/By End of Work Day
- Within 24 Hours

*10. Indicate the status of the investigation being reviewed. [History includes any type of prior intake in this case including I&R but not that of the adults as children.]

- Initial intake on family with no prior history
- Intake on family WITH prior history but never opened for services
- Additional intake on a DCP&P case already open
- Intake on closed case

*11. If the case was open or closed within the past 6 months, did the investigator speak to the previous worker?

- Yes
- N/A-Initial/new or re-open but more than 6 months has passed.
- No. Specify 'unknown' or reason if known.

*12. Does the record indicate that the investigator reviewed the child's/family's history with DCP&P?

- Yes
- N/A-no prior history
- No. Specify 'unknown' or reason if known.

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

*** 13. If the case participants resided in another state or US political jurisdiction within the past 12 months, did the investigator contact child protective services in that jurisdiction to obtain information pertaining to the following persons?**

	Yes	No	N/A
Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alleged perpetrator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 14. Was a teamed field response ("Buddy System") required in this investigation per DCF Policy II A 1405?**

- Yes
 No

*** 15. Did a "Buddy" participate in this investigation?**

- Yes
 No
 N/A

*** 16. Was a pre-investigation conference held?**

- Yes
 No

*** 17. Select the number of children listed in NJ SPIRIT for this family from the drop-down menu.**

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Child Information. #1

Complete this series of questions for each child in the family.

***18. Child ID Number [Source: Reviewer Reference Sheet.]**

***19. Age of Child: #1**

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-13
- 14 and older

***20. Race/Ethnicity of Child:**

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Unable to Determine
- Unknown
- Other (please specify)

***21. What was the role of this child in the investigation?**

- Child victim
- Sibling
- Other child in household
- Other child in family but not currently in the home
- Alleged perpetrator
- Child Closed-no active role in this investigation

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***22. When was initial in-person contact made with this child?**

- By end of work day
- Within 24 hours
- Within 48 hours
- Within 72 hours
- Beyond 72 hours
- No contact made

***23. If child was a named victim, was contact made [q9]?**

- Yes
- No
- N/A-not a child victim

***24. If child victim was not contacted within the assigned response time, did the investigator make a minimum of three, time staggered attempts to contact the child within the assigned time frame? (Good Faith Effort)**

- Yes
- No
- N/A-child contacted within response time

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***25. Indicate any steps taken following the failed attempt(s) to contact child.[Check all that apply.]**

- Consulted supervisor
- Made additional attempts to contact at different times of day
- Requested SPRU to contact child/family
- Contacted the local police to assist in locating child/family
- Contacted the reporter to identify other information sources, verify address, directions and description of home
- Contacted the family's previous DCF worker/supervisor for assistance
- Searched for family in available computer data systems
- Contacted/attempted contact of the family by telephone
- Sought court order to investigate/produce child
- Contacted School/Board of Education
- No steps were taken
- N/A-child contacted within response time
- Other steps taken (please specify)

***26. Indicate who was present when the child was initially seen/interviewed. [Check all that apply.]**

- Child interviewed alone
- Parent/Caretaker
- Sibling(s)
- Another child not a sibling
- Agency/Facility staff person
- Reporter/Designee
- Law Enforcement
- School staff person
- N/A-child not contacted
- Unable to determine
- Other (please specify)

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***27. Indicate where the child was initially seen/interviewed.**

- Home-Birth/Adoptive
- Resource Home
- Congregate Care Treatment Facility (CSOC)
- Hospital/Medical Facility
- Youth Shelter
- Relative/Friend Home
- Independent Living Program
- School
- Child Advocacy Center
- Unable to determine
- Other (please specify)

***28. Select the living arrangement for this child.[At the time of the intake]**

- Home-Birth/Adoptive
- Resource Home-Unrelated
- Resource Home-Related
- Relative/Friend Home (not in DCP&P placement)
- Congregate Care Treatment Facility (CSOC)
- Hospital/Medical Facility
- Independent Living Program
- Juvenile Detention Facility
- Youth Shelter
- Family Shelter
- Homeless
- Other (please specify)

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***29. Indicate the educational status of this child.**

- Pre-school/day care
- Regular K-12
- Special education
- Home-schooled
- School-age but not enrolled
- None-Not applicable or required
- Unable to Determine
- Other (please specify)

***30. Was this child's mother interviewed?**

- Yes
- No. Specify 'unknown reason' or reason if known.

***31. Was this child's father interviewed?**

- Yes
- No. Specify 'unknown reason' or reason if known.

***32. Are there additional children in this family?**

- Yes
- No

³⁴ These questions are repeated for a maximum of ten children.

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Information Collection

***168. Which agencies were involved with the family at the time of the investigation?
(Other than DCP&P) [Check all that apply]**

- DCF Children's System of Care (CSOC)
- DCF Division of Family and Community Partnerships
- DHS-Division of Developmental Disabilities
- DHS-Division of Mental Health Services
- DHS-Division of Addiction Services
- Private Mental/Behavioral Health Provider
- County Welfare Agency
- Court/Parole/Probation
- Law Enforcement
- None
- Unknown
- Other (please specify)

***169. Who was the reporter? [Select from drop-down]**

***170. Does the record indicate that the investigator spoke with the reporter?**

- Yes
- N/A-contact information not available
- No.Specify 'unknown reason' or reason if known.

***171. Was the alternate caregiver interviewed?**

- Yes
- N/A-no alternate involved
- No. Specify 'unknown reason' or reason if known.

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***172. Describe the contact with the alleged perpetrator and other adults in the child's/family's home.**

	All Interviewed	Some Interviewed	None Interviewed	Not applicable
Alleged perpetrator(s) (if unknown, select N/A)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other adults in the home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***173. Was law enforcement involved with this investigation?**

- Yes
 No

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Law Enforcement

174. Did the investigator/supervisor speak with law enforcement?

- Yes
 No

175. Did law enforcement prohibit contact with potential witnesses, alleged perpetrator(s) and/or victims pending their investigation?

- No
 Yes

If Yes, comment if relevant:

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Collaterals

*** 176. Did the investigator obtain information from the following collaterals?**

	Yes	Attempted	No	Not Applicable
Child care provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law enforcement professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighbor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relative(s) outside of home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse treatment provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If 'Other #1' or 'Other #2', please specify:

*** 177. In your judgment as a reviewer, were all applicable collaterals secured?**

Yes

No (please specify which were missing or deficient.)

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

Collaterals

* 176. Did the investigator obtain information from the following collaterals?

	Yes	Attempted	No	Not Applicable
Child care provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental health professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law enforcement professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Neighbor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relative(s) outside of home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse treatment provider	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If 'Other #1' or 'Other #2', please specify:

* 177. In your judgment as a reviewer, were all applicable collaterals secured?

Yes

No (please specify which were missing or deficient.)

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

*** 178. With which of the following DCF resources did the investigator consult? [Check all that apply.]**

- CADC
- Clinical consultant
- DV liaison
- Medical personnel/Child Health Unit
- DAG
- Regional Diagnostic Center
- None were applicable or necessary
- None but one or more of the above were applicable. (Please explain which were applicable and why.)

*** 179. Was the family referred to the following DCF resources for assessment and did they participate?**

	Referred? (Yes/No)	Participate? (Yes/No/NA)
CADC	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
DVL	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Children's System of Care (CSOC)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Regional Diagnostic Center	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

*** 180. Assess the quality of the collateral contacts generally:**

	Yes/No
Was new information learned?	<input type="text"/>
Was all collateral information clearly integrated into the investigative process?	<input type="text"/>
Was any of the collateral information contradictory?	<input type="text"/>

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***181. If collaterals presented contradictory information, what steps were taken to resolve the conflict? [Check all that apply.]**

- Re-interview one or more participants
- Conference with supervisor
- Obtain additional collateral information
- None/No action taken
- N/A-Information was not contradictory
- Other Steps (please specify)

Risk and Safety Assessments/Plans

*182. What was the assessed Risk Score for this investigation?

Risk Score Low Moderate High Very High

*183. Were the responses on the Risk Assessment consistent with the information gathered throughout the investigation?

- Yes completely
- Partially
- No

If Partially or No (please specify your reason)

*184. Do you agree with the Risk Score?

- Yes
- No (please explain)

*185. What was the Safety Decision for this investigation?

Safety Score Safe Safety Protection Plan Required Unsafe/Removal Required

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***186. Were the responses on the Safety Assessment consistent with the information gathered throughout the investigation?**

- Yes completely
 Partially
 No

If Partially or No (please specify your reason)

***187. Do you agree with the Safety Decision?**

- Yes
 No (please explain)

***188. Was a Safety Protection Plan...**

	Yes	No	N/A
Created? (yes/no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Necessary? (In your judgment, yes/no)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timely?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Realistic?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appropriate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Describe the reason for your disagreement, if any.

DCF Investigations Review Survey–January 2013

Conclusions

***189. The post-investigation conference with the supervisor was:**

- Conducted within Investigatory time frame (including approved extension)
- Conducted after the Investigation was closed
- No evidence of a conference

***190. Was there evidence in the record that the finding(s) notification letters (Form 9-28, 9-28a, 9-30) were sent to the family and/or confirmed perpetrator?**

- Yes
- No

***191. Was there evidence in the record that the notification to reporter letter (Form 26-64) was sent to the reporter?**

- Yes
- No, reporter contact information unknown
- No, but reporter contact information was known

***192. If any allegations were SUBSTANTIATED, was there evidence in the record that the notification to law enforcement (Form 9-32) was sent to law enforcement?**

- Yes
- No
- N/A-no substantiated findings

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***193. Did the documentation indicate that the family would benefit from the following services? [All columns and rows require an answer.]**

	Benefit?	Did the investigator refer the family to this service?	Did the family utilize the service during the investigation period?
TANF	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Food Stamps	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
WIC	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Medicaid	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Disability Services	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Housing Assistance	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Individual Psychotherapy	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Family Therapy	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Substance Abuse Treatment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Utility Assistance	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Transportation Services	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Clothing Assistance	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Legal Services	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other Service	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please specify "Other Service".

***194. Was the investigation completed within 60 days of receipt of the intake from SCR?**

- Yes
 No

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Extension

195. Since the investigation was not completed within 60 days, was an:

Yes/No

Extension requested by the
investigator?

Extension approved by the
supervisor?

196. Was a Case Summary for Closing/Transfer (Form 26-57) submitted AND approved?

Yes

No

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Analysis

*** 197. In your judgment, indicate below the areas which you feel represented systemic challenges in this investigation? [Check all that apply.]**

- Legal (ex. Court, Judge, etc.)
- Availability or access to services
- Conflict in assessment among system partners (ex. DAG, police, health providers, etc.)
- Need for training in investigation protocol
- Family resistance
- Lack of timely cooperation among system partners
- None
- Other (please specify)

*** 198. Did the investigator gather sufficient information to make an accurate finding on the allegation(s), including an accurate assessment as to whether or not the child(ren)'s safety, health and well-being are being adequately met?**

- Yes
- No (please explain below)

*** 199. Does the information DOCUMENTED support the findings made in this investigation?**

- Yes completely
- Partially
- No

If 'Partially' or 'No', please specify your reason:

DCF Investigations Review Survey-January 2013

***200. In your judgment, was the overall investigation:**

	Completely	Partially	Marginally	Not at all
Thorough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comprehensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***201. Please list three reasons for your answer to the previous question.**

Reason #1:

Reason #2:

Reason #3:

***202. During the course of the investigation, did DCP&P make diligent efforts to provide and/or arrange for appropriate services for the family to protect the children and/or prevent their entry into foster care?**

- Yes completely
- Partially
- No

If 'Partially' or 'No' please explain your reason:

***203. Was it decided that this family's CP&P case was to remain open for permanency services following this investigation?**

- Yes
- No

Strengths and Needs Assessments

204. Was a Child Strengths and Needs Assessment completed?

- Yes
- No

205. Were Child Strengths and Needs Assessments completed for each child in the family?

- Yes
- No

206. Were the responses on each of the Child Strengths and Needs Assessment(s) reflective of the information gathered?

- Yes to all questions
- Partially to some questions
- No

If 'Partially' or 'No', please explain below.

207. Was a Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessment completed?

- Yes
- No

208. Were the responses on the Caregiver Strengths and Needs Assessment reflective of the information gathered?

- Yes to all questions
- Partially to some questions
- No

If 'Partially' or 'No', please explain below.

Additional Comments

209. Please enter any additional comments about this investigation or its review:

