



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist
Governor

George H. Sheldon
Secretary

DATE: May 8, 2009

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH: John Cooper, Acting Assistant Secretary for Operations *Maaher for*
David Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs *D. Fairbanks*

FROM: Alan Abramowitz, State Director, Office of Family Safety *Patricia Badland for*

SUBJECT: Foster Care Referrals Involving Child on Child Sexual Abuse
Due Date: May 20, 2009

PURPOSE: To provide policy clarification on the acceptance and handling of Foster Care Referrals when allegations of Child on Child Sexual Abuse are received on children in licensed foster care.

BACKGROUND: Current policy on Child on Child Sexual Abuse involves reports being accepted and entered into the Florida Safe Families Network only when the child who allegedly committed the act of juvenile sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual behavior is twelve years of age or younger.

When the child who allegedly committed the act of alleged juvenile sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual behavior is a foster child 13 through 17 years of age at the time of the call/fax/web report, and resides in a licensed placement, the hotline counselor accepts the report as a Foster Care Referral special conditions intake.

The focus of acceptance of a Foster Care Referral involving Child on Child Sexual Abuse allegations is dependent upon the age of the child alleged to have committed the act of juvenile sexual abuse or inappropriate sexual behavior. When the alleged sexual offender is over the age of 18 at the time the information is received at the Hotline, a report will not be accepted as a Foster Care Referral. However, the reporter is transferred to local law enforcement.

CLARIFICATION: It is imperative the Department ensures that our most vulnerable children are protected and getting the services they need when allegations of harm become known to staff.

Subsection 65C-30.001(57) of Florida Administrative Rules defines Foster Care Referrals as "calls to the Florida Abuse Hotline regarding concerns about the care provided in a

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licensed foster home, group home or emergency shelter that do not meet the criteria for acceptance of a report of abuse, neglect or abandonment.”

To align practice with code, the Hotline will generate a Foster Care Referral if a foster child is alleged to have been sexually abused or is alleged to have committed an act of juvenile sexual abuse while in a licensed placement and a child abuse investigation or Child on Child Referral has not been accepted for response. This will apply regardless of the age of the juvenile aggressor at the time of the call to the Hotline. The Abuse Hotline Counselor will also continue to transfer the call to the Sheriff's Office as required by law.

The licensing worker responsible for responding to and assessing the Foster Care Referral will ensure the child's case manager is immediately notified of the information obtained in the referral in order to determine service needs and refer the child for services as appropriate.

ACTION REQUESTED: Please disseminate this memo to all Family Safety staff within the Circuits and Regions to include Community Based Care case management and licensing staff for review and feedback to the proposed policy clarification.

Each Region should provide a coordinated response to Chris Compton via email no later than May 20, 2009.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Should you have any questions, please contact Chris Compton at 850-443-6646, or via e-mail at chris_compton@dcf.state.fl.us .