

CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATION

CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to assist law enforcement officers conducting child abuse investigations. The primary objective of the investigation is the protection of the child.

I. Preliminary Investigative Procedures

A. First officer on the scene

1. Secure the safety of the child/children
2. Determine the need for medical attention

B. Establish that a crime has been committed

- Child Abuse is defined as:
- A physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person.
- Sexual Abuse, including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation
- Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child
- Cruel or inhuman corporal punishment or injury
- Neglect, including both severe and general neglect

C. If our agency lacks jurisdiction, immediately refer the case by telephone, fax or electronic transmission to the agency with proper jurisdiction.

D. Conduct interviews (if appropriate):

1. Victim(s)
2. Witness(es)
3. Suspect(s)

E. Gather and preserve all evidence

F. Determine the need for protective custody

G. I.D. suspect - arrest, if appropriate

H. Make appropriate notifications/cross—reports:

1. Department of Social Services, Licensing Division
2. District/prosecuting attorney
3. Department of Justice
4. Other - fire department, health department - specify
5. Child Protective Services

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Fax SS 8583 form to OC Social Services Child Abuse Registry at:
714-938-0289
Police Telephone: Line: 714-704-8070
Public line: 714-940-1000

II. Neglect and Emotional Abuse

- A. Look for physical and behavioral indicators (no food, poor growth pattern, depressed).
- B. Look for parental/caretaker characteristics (Apathetic, passive, unconcerned for child).
- C. Be cautious of special circumstances which may resemble neglect (poverty, ignorance, cultural and socio-economic differences). The child must still be protected.

III. Physical Abuse

- A. Look for physical marks and/or trauma on child (bruises, welts, burns, fractures, lacerations).
- B. Evaluate validity of explanation for injuries (is it consistent with child's injuries).
- C. Document injuries (medical examination, photographs).

IV. Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

- A. Look for physical and behavioral indicators (genital trauma, stained underclothing, unusual sexual behavior).
- B. Look for evidence (child erotica, pornography, and diaries).

VI. Follow - Up Procedures

- A. Review preliminary investigation/reports
- B. Coordinate with other responding agencies
- C. Conduct records/file checks
- D. Conduct background check on suspect
- E. Interview/interrogate

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- F. Re-interview victim/witnesses if necessary