

4e1. Procedure for On-Site Interview of Alleged Victims of Child Abuse/Neglect

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Procedure

The following guidelines should be observed when a victim or alleged victim of child abuse or neglect is to be interviewed by Child Protective Services (CPS) social worker and/or law enforcement officer at any site of Lower Columbia College Head Start/EHS/ECEAP.

- It is the responsibility of the CPS social worker or law enforcement, not Head Start/EHS/ECEAP staff, to notify parents of allegations and any other activity associated with the referral. Head Start/EHS/ECEAP staff shall refrain from informing parents of a referral or any activity associated the referral unless decided by specific consultation with the CPS social worker. It is the responsibility of the CPS social worker and/or law enforcement officer to inform the child's parent/guardian in a timely manner that: (a) A site interview has occurred; (b) The specifics of the allegations of abuse and neglect; and, (c) Disposition of the investigation. If the parent/guardian has any questions or concerns, the Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Area Manager may refer the parent/guardian to CPS and/or the law enforcement officer.
- The CPS social worker or law enforcement officer must contact the Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Area Manager or designee, present proper identification, and make known the name of the child to be interviewed.
- The Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Area Manager or designee will provide a non-threatening setting for the interview in which the child feels comfortable.
- The Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Area Manager or designee, whose role is to observe in a neutral manner, may be invited to attend the interview.
- The Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Area Manager or designee recognizes that in sensitive interviews depending on the age of the child and nature of the child abuse/neglect referral (such as child sexual abuse referrals), the involvement of a staff member may interfere with the investigation.
- The CPS social worker and/or law enforcement officer and/or team member will conduct the interview.
- In the event the CPS social worker has a Court order, or the law enforcement officer determines the need to remove the child from the Head Start/EHS/ECEAP program site, law enforcement will complete the necessary custody form and notify parents as per RCW 26.44. Head Start/EHS/ECEAP will request that the CPS social worker and/or law enforcement officer sign acknowledgment that they are taking custody of the child.

Per [RCW 26.44.050 \(app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.050\)](http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.050) the law enforcement agency or the Department of Children, Youth and Families investigating

a report is hereby authorized to photograph such a child for the purpose of providing documentary evidence of the physical condition of the child. It is not appropriate for Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Programs and staff to substantiate abuse or neglect by photographs of the alleged child victim.