

Chapter 4

Identifying and Reporting

Intake

When a report is received the agency must determine:

1. Does the information provided qualify this as a possible case of abuse and neglect? A person who calls in because they are divorced and was not allowed to see their child on the appointed visitation day would probably be told that their report would not qualify.
2. Is the child in immediate danger? If so, the intake professional would immediately contact the appropriate agency and someone would intervene quickly.
3. What level of danger is there for the child? If the case is one of neglect involving the condition of the home, it might be assigned a lower priority and it may take days or even weeks to be investigated. If it is severe abuse, it would be assigned highest priority and be a matter of hours until investigation.

Case Studies

- A two year old child in your classroom complains that their bottom hurts and shows you there is blood when she goes to the bathroom.
- A six year old child has bruises on the backs of his legs and between his legs and tells you that he fell.
- A three year old comes to school every morning filthy, with torn clothing and has a sore that has gone untreated so that it is infected.
- An eight year old tells you that her uncle is doing bad things to her.

Assignment and Investigation

- Maximum time for investigation must be stated
- Law Enforcement
- Multifaceted Responses: Caseworkers, Advocacy centers, police, etc.

Interview

- Establish rapport with the child.
 - general questions about the child, such as things she likes to do, her favorite TV shows,
 - reassure the child that they are not in trouble
 - reassure that child is safe and will be protected
 - use body language to convey concern and encourage discussion.
- Ask open-ended questions.
 - do not to lead the child's answers
 - get the child to be very specific if they are describing incidents
- Ask questions on the child's developmental level

Case Studies: Reported: How would you approach this case?

- A call is received that a 4 year old is wandering the streets all day long alone, dirty and hungry.
- Complaint that a child came to school with bruises on their arms and back and said, “Daddy hit me.”
- Call from child care that a child is constantly trying to simulate sexual acts with other children and is acts very sexual.
- An eight year old child calls and reports that his mother hits him and won't feed him.

Adjudication

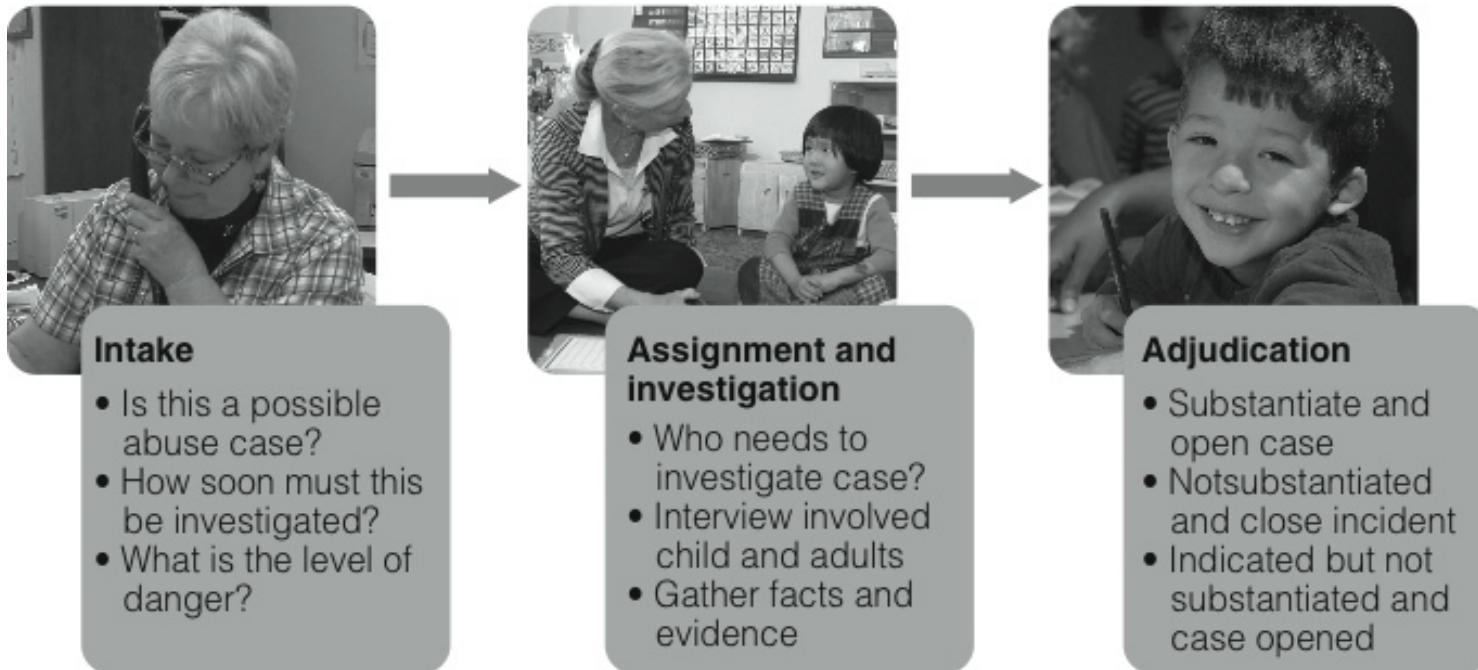
- Courts
 - Criminal
 - Civil
 - Family
 - Juvenile
 - Probate

Court Process

- **Petition:** A petition is a complaint or allegation of child abuse or neglect. The petition will state the allegation and may request removal of a child.
- **Hearing:** A hearing is held as soon as possible to determine:
 - if a child is to be placed in substitute care
 - to appoint counsel for the parent (if they do not have one)
 - an attorney or Guardian Ad Litem for the child
 - to order assessments and services for families and children
 - expectations for the parents, and what needs to happen next
 - Sometimes the case ends after the hearing if the parents are cooperative and Child Protective Services sees no need to proceed further.

Adjudication and Disposition:

- Hearings may held to:
 - review evidence
 - to hear testimony
 - to issue orders
 - to determine custody
 - Temporary
 - Permanent
 - to sever parental rights
 - and to make a disposition of the case (Jones, 2006)
- Civil court proceedings vs criminal courts



Guardian ad litem

- CAPTA requirement
- Appointed by court
- Special advocate
 - Often an attorney
- Represents only child's interests
- Not associated with agency or family
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
 - Volunteers

Criminal Prosecution

- Criminal Courts
- Severe abuse and sexual abuse (in some states)
- Rely on evidence and testimony
- Child's testimony
 - Try to keep it to one time
 - Remote broadcast to keep child from facing perpetrator
 - Videotape testimony advocated by American Academy of Pediatrics

Child Protective Services

- Role
- Family-centered services
 - **family support** -preventative services, aimed at strengthening the family.
 - **family preservation** given to families who have been identified as being abusive or neglectful but who are felt to be able with the services to keep the child
- **Which is more important? Why?**

Foster Care

- 324,000 children removed from their home and placed in foster care in 2006 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).
- 500,000 in foster care at that time
- **46% of children in foster care are in nonfamily foster homes (USDHHS, 2006).**
- Relative Care
- Nonfamily Care
- Group and Institutional Care

Adoption

- The Adoption and Safe Families Act
 - a child who has been in foster care for fifteen out of the past 22 months and whose parents have not met the requirements for having their child returned to their home can and must be placed for adoption
 - Adoptions handled by
 - CPS
 - (http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/adoption_and_foster_care/)
 - Nonprofit

Coordinated Responses

- Child Advocacy Centers
 - Integrated Services
 - One primary interview of the child
 - Investigation, social services and therapeutic intervention together