

The parent/caregiver whom the child or children were removed from will also be given a case plan. A case plan consists of court ordered tasks a parent/caregiver must complete before their child(ren) can be returned to the home. The family has the right to legal counsel. A case manager is also assigned to the family who will guide the family through the court process. The child(ren) in the case will be appointed a Guardian Ad Litem who will advocate for the child(ren)'s best interest throughout the court's involvement.

State law requires that a safe and stable home be achieved within 12 months. Children need to have a safe and caring home in order to grow and develop in a healthy adult. In most cases, parents will be involved in helping to determine the best long-term care and goals for the child. Court oversight will continue until the child can be safely returned home, or until some other permanent care is arranged.

How is a report made to the hotline?

The Florida Child Abuse Hotline can be contacted via phone at 1-800-96Abuse. Reports can also be made online at www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report.

Anyone reporting in good faith shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability. Any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false report or counsels another to make a false report is guilty of a felony of the third degree.



CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

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CHILD PROTECTION

THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS



Child Protective Investigations

Pasco Sheriff's Office
Chris Nocco, Sheriff

CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS



What does Child Protective Investigations do?

The Pasco Sheriff's Office Child Protective Investigations Division responds to reports of alleged abuse, neglect and or abandonment. All reports investigated by Child Protective Investigators are first reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. The state-wide hotline, located in Tallahassee receives the reports of alleged abuse, neglect and/or abandonment and routes the calls to the county where the child(ren) are located at the time the report is made.

Reports are made by concerned community professionals, such as teachers, counselors, therapists, judges, law enforcement officers, daycare providers and medical professionals. Reports can also be made by family members, friends or neighbors.

When such a report is received, state law requires the Pasco Sheriff's Office Child Protective Investigations Division to investigate each report within the county. The purpose of the investigation is to make sure that any child in the home is not experiencing abuse or neglect.

Investigations include children between birth and the age of eighteen years.

What is the goal of Florida's Child Protection System?

The goal of Florida's Child Protection System is to ensure that all children are living in homes that are safe from abuse or neglect.

What are the possible results of the investigation?

Some investigations will reveal that there is no indication of child abuse or neglect. In these cases, the investigator will close the case upon completion of the investigation. Some situations require a safety plan or referrals that aim to change the circumstances that endangers the safety or well being of the child(ren) in the home.

Referrals may include community resources such as in-home counseling or therapy, helping victims of domestic violence obtain a protective order against the alleged abuser, linking a family to a shelter if the family's housing is inadequate or in a case of domestic violence. Child Protective Investigators may also refer a family to child care services and governmental programs available in the area.

If voluntary and diversion services do not alleviate the level of threatened harm to the child (ren) involved in the investigation and efforts are not sufficient to safeguard the children,

court ordered services may be considered. At times the child(ren) may remain in their home while court ordered services are in place. If services do not alleviate the risk to the child(ren) or there is risk of imminent danger to the child(ren) then removal may be explored by the Child Protective Investigator, the investigator's supervisor and the State Attorney.

If a child is removed from the home the CPI and State Attorney presents it's case to a dependency judge within 24 hours of removal from the child(ren)'s parents/guardians.

It is the goal in most cases to reunify the child(ren) with the caregiver the child(ren) was removed from.

In cases where a child is removed from his or her home, the CPI will make every effort to place the child in the home of the non-custodial parent, a relative or a family friend prior to placing a child into a foster home.

If a dependency judge finds probable cause for a child to be removed from his or her home, the judge will establish visitation rights between the child and the parent/
