

CHANGE NOTICE 3-2005

Date March 1, 2005

Manual Family Services, Volume I: Children's Services, Chapter VIII: Child Protective Services, Section 1418: Investigative Assessments in Child Care Facilities

To: County Directors of Social Services

Effective: March 1, 2005

Attached to this letter is the revised Section 1418: Investigative Assessments in Child Care Facilities.

The need for manual changes is a result of a series of articles published in 2003 concerning 33 child deaths that occurred in North Carolina child care facilities over four years. The articles drew attention to the occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in child care facilities, identified risk and problems associated with illegal child care, and examined the investigation process of agencies when deaths occur in child care facilities.

Carmen Hooker Odom, the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, subsequently convened a group of stakeholders to consider ways to strengthen child care services provided to North Carolina's children. Much of the work of the *Investigating Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Facilities Task Force* (Task Force) focused on how to improve the system of investigating child abuse and neglect in child care facilities. One recommendation was to streamline the process for investigating abuse and neglect in child care facilities.

To begin this streamlining process, the Divisions of Social Services and Child Development met to discuss ways to enhance existing collaborations. As a result of this discussion, a county workgroup was formed in August 2004, consisting of 5 county partners and State Division staff to review the policy for investigating child care facilities for abuse and neglect. The attached manual changes are a result of the collaboration of this workgroup.

The present Case Decision Summary that is used to notify the Division of Child Development (DCD) of the case decision is eliminated and replaced with the Case Decision Summary/Initial Case Plan tool, which is an exiting tool. The Case Decision Summary will be faxed to the DCD within 7 days of the case decision instead of 30 days. While most counties were having discussions with the DCD consultant prior to staffing the case, it is now stated in policy that this discussion needs to take place.

County DSS's have not historically investigated preschool and before and after school child care programs operated by the public school system. The Department of Public

Instruction and the Division of Child Development have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) stating that all of these programs operated by the public school

system will be licensed through DCD. This will include all pre-Kindergarten classes that receive "More at 4" funding and other subsidies. Once a facility receives a license under this MOA, it will be subject to CPS investigative assessment by DSS.

Please ensure that all staff members who have child welfare responsibility are provided copies of the new section or access to it via the DSS web site. The on-line manual web address is:

<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/>

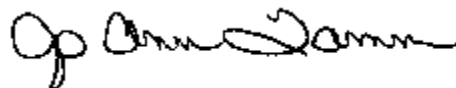
Once on the Division's web page, click on "Quick Links", then click on "Child Welfare Manuals", and click on Chapter VIII, Section 1418. Any questions may be addressed to the Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section staff at (919) 733-4622.

Instructions:

Delete Section 1418: Investigative Assessments in Child Care Facilities

Insert Section 1418: Investigative Assessments in Child Care Facilities

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jo Ann Lamm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jo Ann Lamm, Section Chief

Family Support and Child Welfare Services

Attachments

[CS1418](#)

[Attachment A](#)

[Attachment B](#)

JAL/lme