

# Examination of Child by Physician or Nurse Practitioner and/or Child Protective Investigator

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

**Policy: 500.0090**

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Departmental policy and Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) 40-11-6 mandate that a child who is suspected of being physically or sexually abused must be examined by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner. Departmental policy requires a child who is suspected of being neglected to be examined by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner when there is evidence that the suspected neglect has had a detrimental effect on the child's physical well-being.

Physical observation can be performed by the Child Protective Investigator (CPI) and parent/caretaker or another adult as long as the procedure is in compliance with Departmental policy (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 2.4) and is followed by a physician or nurse practitioner's examination if there is any indication of physical abuse or neglect (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 2.4.1, Physical/Medical Indicators of Abuse and Neglect, and Section 2.4.2, Behavioral Indicators of Abuse and Neglect).

## Related Procedure

[Examination of Child by Physician or Nurse Practitioner and/or Child Protective Investigator](#)

## Related Policy

[Removal of Child from Home](#)

## Examination of Child by Physician or Nurse Practitioner and/or Child Protective Investigator

### Procedure from Policy 500.0090: Examination of Child by Physician or Nurse Practitioner and/or Child Protective Investigator

#### I. Observation by Child Protective Investigator (CPI)

- A. The CPI seeks the permission of the parent/caretaker prior to observing the child's body for evidence of physical abuse or neglect.
- B. The Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Work Sheet is completed at the time of the observation by the CPI (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 5.5):
  - 1. The observation must be performed by the CPI and parent/caretaker or other adult. If the child is at school, the CPI attempts to contact the parent/caretaker before having the school nurse examine the child. If the parent/caretaker cannot be reached, the CPI has the school nurse examine the child. In this instance, the school nurse completes the Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Work Sheet and the CPI witnesses the form.
  - 2. Examination of a child ten years or over must be conducted by a CPI who is the same sex as the child.
  - 3. The CPI may never disrobe and/or examine a child who is alleged to have been sexually abused.
  - 4. The Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Worksheet documents an injury sustained by a child. The Worksheet is a valuable tool in the decision-making process to "indicate" or "unfound" a report and can be used as evidence in court proceedings. Photographs of the child's injury may be placed in the Investigative Record in place of the worksheet:
    - a. The Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Worksheet is completed by the CPI at the time of the examination. It is never completed from memory.
    - b. The CPI completes identifying information at top of form.
    - c. The CPI draws the injury on the appropriate body view. Adjacent to the injury depiction, the CPI describes the size, depth, shape, color, and estimated age of the injury. If there are multiple injuries depicted on the chart, the CPI draws an arrow from the description to the appropriate drawing.
    - d. CPIs must have witness(es) to the examination sign the back of the Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Worksheet after reviewing the form.

#### II. Examination by Physician or Nurse Practitioner

- A. When immediate and intensive medical diagnosis and treatment are indicated, medical intervention receives priority over other parts of the investigative process.
- B. Securing a medical examination, including X-rays and photographs, is also considered in non-emergency situations when this information or evidence is believed necessary to substantiate the allegations of abuse and/or neglect. The Report of Examination is completed by the attending physician or nurse practitioner immediately following the examination.
  - 1. The CPI consults with the parent/caretaker and offers the following options:
    - a. The parent/caretaker and CPI will take child to physician or nurse practitioner or hospital emergency room.
    - b. The CPI will take the child to a physician or nurse practitioner or hospital emergency room.

- c. The parent/caretaker and CPI can jointly disrobe the child and conduct a cursory exam to be followed by a physical examination by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner.
  - d. If the parent/caretaker refuses to cooperate, the CPI takes the child to be examined with or without consent of the parent/caretaker.
2. An examination by a licensed physician or nurse practitioner must be conducted in the following situations. The CPI may request that he/she be allowed to observe the examination:
- a. There is evidence of abuse or neglect.
  - b. The child states that he/she has been physically/sexually abused or neglected.
  - c. There are allegations of abuse, unsubstantiated by examination by the CPI, but the child is too young and/or non-verbal and cannot confirm or deny the report or aid in the examination.
  - d. The child is severely ill and requires immediate medical attention (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 2.5.1, Medical Examinations). In such situations the CPI never wastes time disrobing or observing the child.
3. The Report of Examination serves as a document for the attending physician or nurse practitioner to record pertinent data from the examination of a child referred for possible abuse or neglect:
- a. The Report of Examination must be completed by the attending physician or nurse practitioner immediately following examination.
  - b. The physician or nurse practitioner is responsible for noting and documenting any evidence of physical abuse or neglect.
  - c. The Report of Examination can be used as prima facie evidence in seeking an Ex Parte, Order of Detention (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 4.4, The Burden and Standard of Proof, and [DCYF Policy 500.0075, Removal of Child from Home](#)).