

Examination of Child by Physician/Nurse Practitioner and/or 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/nurse practitioner. Departmental policy requires a child who is suspected of being neglected to be examined by a licensed physician/nurse practitioner when there is evidence that the suspected neglect has had a detrimental effect on the child's physical well-being.

Physical examinations can be performed by the 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/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 Procedures...

[Examination by CPI](#)

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Examination by CPI

Procedure From Policy 500.0090: Examination of Child by Physician/Nurse Practitioner and/or Investigator

- A. The CPI should seek 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 to be completed at the time of the examination by the CPI (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 5.5):
 1. The examination must be performed by the CPI and parent/caretaker or other adult. If the child is at school, the CPI should attempt to contact the parent/caretaker before having the school nurse examine the child. If the parent/caretaker cannot be reached, the CPI should have the school nurse examine the child. In this instance, the school nurse will complete the Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Work Sheet and the CPI will witness the form.
 2. Examination of a child ten (10) 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 purpose of the Suspected Abuse/Injury Note Worksheet is to document an injury sustained by a child. The Worksheet can be 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 to be 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 describe the size, depth, shape, color, and estimated age of the injury. If there are multiple injuries depicted on the chart, draw 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.

Examination by Physician/Nurse Practitioner

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- A. When immediate and intensive medical diagnosis and treatment are indicated, medical intervention should receive priority over other parts of the investigative process.
- B. Securing a medical examination, including X-rays and photographs, should also be considered in non-emergency situations when this information/evidence is believed necessary to substantiate the allegations of abuse and/or neglect. The Report of Examination is completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner immediately following the examination.
 1. The CPI should consult with the parent/caretaker and offer the following options:
 - a. The parent/caretaker and CPI will take the child to physician/nurse practitioner or hospital emergency room.
 - b. The CPI will take the child to a physician/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/nurse practitioner.
 - d. If the parent/caretaker refuses to cooperate, RIGL 40-11-6 allows the CPI to take the child to be examined with or without consent of the parent/caretaker.
 2. An examination by a licensed physician/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 nonverbal and cannot confirm or deny the report or aid in the examination.
 - d. The child is severely ill and should receive immediate medical attention (refer to Investigative Handbook, Section 2.5.1, Medical Examinations). In such situations the CPI must never waste time disrobing and/or examining the child.
 3. The Report of Examination serves as a document for the attending physician/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/nurse practitioner immediately following examination.
 - b. The physician/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 [Policy 500.0075, Removal of Child from Home](#)).