

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES
FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF
CHILD ABUSE CASES
UNDER THE CHILD WELFARE ACT, 1978
BY THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Children's Services Division
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The Standards and Guidelines for the Management of Child Abuse Cases under The Child Welfare Act (1978) by the Children's Aid Societies were developed as part of the Ministry's plan to implement the recommendations of the Report of the Task Force on Child Abuse. Work on them began just a few months after the tabling of the Task Force Report in the Legislature in June, 1978, and from the very beginning there has been close and continuing consultation between the Ministry and the Children's Aid Societies. This kind of collaboration is particularly important in the development of a document which addresses decision-making and procedure in situations where a child may be at risk and where both the Ministry and the Societies have a responsibility.

If we are to aim for a truly effective service for children at risk and their families, the responsibility and the accountability in such situations must be equally shared between the Children's Aid Societies and the Ministry. Although actual on-the-spot decisions must be made by the Society concerned, the Ministry's responsibility is to provide guidance and consultation and to support the Society fully when its actions are consistent with Ministry policy.

We recognize that decision-making in child abuse cases is complex and difficult and that good case management in these instances by necessity involves a certain amount of risk taking. It is not our intention that all children in the slightest degree of risk should be taken into care and we therefore accept that risk will exist. We recognize also that not all decisions will turn out to be the right ones. We know that workers will often have to choose between situations knowing that none of the alternatives is ideal. Our hope in developing these Standards and Guidelines is that workers will be helped in making these difficult decisions and that they will be more secure in the knowledge that having done what is required, they will have the support of their Society and of the Ministry.

Even though not all decisions will be perfect, at the same time they should be as well-informed as possible. Protection staff who must make risky choices have often felt very isolated and vulnerable. We hope that these Standards and Guidelines will be seen as a form of protection for them, and we can assure them and their Societies that wherever decisions are based on careful judgements and the procedures are followed they will have strong support from the Ministry. If a case goes badly and the procedures have been applied, it will be the procedures that will be judged and not the individual worker or the Society.

Thorough knowledge of what must be done in difficult circumstances should be helpful and supportive for staff by providing a sense of security rather than feelings of uncertainty. As the procedures become familiar the degree of stress for protection workers should diminish, and it can be expected that knowing and following the procedures will result in a more effective use of time.

The task of developing Standards and Guidelines for practice that are applicable in all Children's Aid Societies in all parts of the Province is fraught with difficulties which stem from the diversity of the Societies, the varying areas they serve, and the particular and unique characteristics of their communities. Problems also arise from differing expectations about how standards should be framed. Opinions range from those who advocate only guidelines which would permit almost total latitude to those who feel that meticulous, well defined directives are more appropriate.

Our conviction is that case decisions should be made as close to the situation as possible, and that rigid and mechanistic procedures cannot be applied alike in all cases, nor do such procedures belong in the human services. Since circumstances vary from case to case thus judgements can be made only on an individual case basis. As a general principle, therefore, we have attempted to describe the minimum expected procedures, but application of these procedures rests on the professional judgement that a child may be at risk and that the procedures should apply. As an example of this approach the Standards state that the initial response process to a complaint of child abuse may take one of many forms, depending on the facts known (INS-02.1). Similarly it should be clear that the

procedures for information gathering apply when the known facts are such that child abuse is suspected (INS-03.1) and would not apply to every complaint. Throughout the document there is considerable opportunity for the application of discretion and professional judgement, but, when in the worker's best opinion child abuse is indicated, the Ministry must be assured that certain procedures to investigate and to protect the child are followed.

It is our belief that the procedures outlined in these Standards and Guidelines reflect good case management and therefore contain nothing that is new or different for many Children's Aid Societies. We also recognize that application of the Standards may impose some problems for a few Societies. In these instances some adjustments in service priorities may be necessary, and should another service need to be cut back we feel this is a small price to pay to be assured that the service offered to endangered children is strong and efficient.

The protection of children, including response to complaints of child abuse, has always been and continues to be a priority in the services offered by the Children's Aid Societies. This is clear in the legislation and is the major reason why the Societies were formed. This is not to deny that other services offered by the Societies are also important, but the protection and care of children must remain a priority. We do believe, however, that the Standards can generally be handled within existing resources and that they represent the kind of practice being offered now by most Societies. We had some uncertainty about this with the first consultation document, but we are now much more confident in light of the consultation process and the many changes that have been made. The number of required Standards has been considerably reduced in response to the reality of caseloads and resources.

It is not our intention to incorporate the Standards into Regulations under The Child Welfare Act at this time. Rather, our preference is to rely on the co-operation of the Societies and the basic supervisory authority of the Ministry. We expect to review the Standards and Guidelines at regular intervals to be sure they are workable and that we understand where problems might exist.

Finally, I commented at the beginning of this letter that this document is the result of a lengthy and involved process of consultation. Included were Children's Aid Society protection staff at all levels, child abuse specialists, hospital and community child abuse teams, medical and legal consultants and Ministry staff. The initial document was developed by Ross Dawson, who was at that time Assistant Director of the Algoma Children's Aid Society. It reflected his experience as a child abuse specialist and his background in child protection services. Jim Dickinson brought his experience in Children's Aid Societies and his facility as a group leader to the process of meeting with Children's Aid Society staff and others throughout the Province to discuss drafts of the document and to consider changes that would make it as practical and relevant as possible. This process included analyzing and incorporating advice received from the Societies through letters and briefs as well as the group meetings. Over-all direction and co-ordination was given by Mrs. Margaret Farina, Program Consultant in the Children's Services Division, who also served on the Task Force on Child Abuse and co-ordinated the Ministry's response to its recommendations. I would like to thank these people, and to thank all those others who contributed their time and effort and knowledge, particularly the Children's Aid Societies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Thomson', written in a cursive style.

George M. Thomson
Associate Deputy Minister.

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Abbreviations Used in this Document

| | |
|--------|---|
| CAS | Children's Aid Society |
| CSD | Children's Services Division |
| COMSOC | Ministry of Community and Social Services |
| CWA | The Child Welfare Act, 1978 |

A. INTRODUCTION

The goal in development of these standards and guidelines is to assure, as far as possible, an adequate and uniform level of service by Children's Aid Societies for investigation and case management in cases of child abuse throughout the Province.

The approach to service underlying these Standards and Guidelines recognizes the importance of the child's own family and the desirability of helping the family create a safe, healthy environment for the child. At the same time the protection service's responsibility is to ensure, as far as possible, the health and safety of the child. These two considerations must co-exist within the philosophy of the child protection service even though their interaction is often complicated by personal feelings, community pressures, and the attitudes of local courts. The dynamics of this inter-play often create a serious dilemma for the child protection service and for the individual protection worker.

The Standards and Guidelines are designed to help, and in some measure, to respond to this dilemma by setting out procedures that must be followed in child abuse investigation so that children are not removed from their homes without thorough investigation of the circumstances and reasonable assurance that removal is necessary to ensure the child's safety. At the same time adherence to the procedures should provide sufficient information to ensure that children in circumstances that place them at risk are protected.

The Standards are necessarily procedural in nature. They describe what must or should be done, but they do not address the important issue of "how", or the process. The process of building and using relationships is the essential social work component, and as such is more properly the content of other documents such as the Ministry's Training Programs for Children's Aid Society Protection Staff and Supervisors. Volumes I, II & IV) CSD, COMSOC, 1980.

The Commentaries at the beginning of each section in the Standards and Guidelines outline the general purpose and rationale of the section; the Standards describe required procedure; and the Guidelines describe additional or alternative procedures that are optional and desirable, but not mandatory.

No Standards and Guidelines document can account for every situation that will arise, nor should this be the attempt since the possible range of situations is infinite, and professional judgements should be made as close as possible to the situation. Thus, the Standards reflect expected procedures based on professional decisions.

Social work in child protection services is difficult, demanding and stressful, particularly in the management of child abuse cases. In such cases it is highly unusual that service is voluntarily sought by the family. Indicators and evidence are seldom clear-cut, and there are always "grey areas" that complicate decision-making. Specialized skills are required of protection workers who handle cases of child abuse, and specific administrative provisions should exist to help support them. This support can best take place in a working environment of shared purpose, clear communication, and quality supervision. The following specific measures are recommended:

- the Societies should make every effort to ensure that all existing and all new protection staff dealing with or likely to deal with cases of child abuse receive appropriate and adequate training in child abuse case management
- the overall direction of a Society's child abuse program should be undertaken only by persons at least at the supervisory level, and such persons must have appropriate knowledge, training and experience in child protection services
- because of the heavy emotional and time demands of abuse cases, caseloads should be generalized rather than composed exclusively of child abuse cases
- provision should be made for regular monitoring of protection caseloads, with additional weighting given to child abuse cases
- provision should be made for an annual review of each person's caseload and performance in handling child abuse cases. Included in this review should be the option for reassignment within the Society, and other measures to relieve the pressure of overload and the emotional and physical depletion that may accompany long-term work with child abuse cases
- wherever possible, and particularly when the Society is providing the service alone, the worker assigned to the case should have back-up assistance from a senior worker or a supervisor
- all Children's Aid Society professional staff must be aware of their responsibilities and the provisions of The Child Welfare Act, 1978.

The Determination of Child Abuse

For purposes of The Child Welfare Act (1978), "abuse" means a condition of,

- a) physical harm,

- b) malnutrition or mental ill-health to a degree that if not immediately remedied could seriously impair growth and development or result in permanent injury or death, or
- c) sexual molestation.

No person having the care, custody, control or charge of a child shall abandon or desert the child or inflict abuse upon the child or permit the child to suffer abuse.

Section 47, CWA, 1978.

A problem in legislation is to make the statute broad enough to cover a multitude of conditions adversely affecting the welfare of children, and at the same time to make it precise enough so that actions are not taken unnecessarily or without sufficient evidence.

The Child Welfare Act definition of child abuse can be interpreted so broadly that it could include almost all protection cases. The intent is to focus on all serious incidents of maltreatment of children and to recognize that they need attention. All but the most severe, however, are excluded as incidents to which the reporting law and penalty provisions would apply. Thus a distinction is made which relates to 'seriousness' of the situation.

The legal aspects of child abuse center on serious harm, or potential serious harm to the child, substantiated by specific evidence. For purposes of The Child Welfare Act this usually occurs in the context of a relationship between the child and the parent(s) or caretaker(s).

In social work terms, child abuse is most often seen as a condition, or a continuum, rather than a single incident, and often substantial evidence is lacking. In these circumstances children at risk and their families often need more help over a longer period of time than those where child abuse has been firmly established.

Many factors enter the determination of child abuse that complicate the decision. These include cultural differences in methods of child rearing, the often fine line between discipline and abuse, lack of knowledge of child development, failure to meet the physical or emotional needs of the child, or failure to protect the child from harm.

In determining whether a situation is child abuse for purposes of The Child Welfare Act the legal requirements of substantiated evidence and social work understanding of behaviour and environment are blended. Therefore, the determination of child abuse is made on a case by case basis rather than by clearly defined categories of situations or conditions.

Although many factors are considered in each case, the major ones are:

- the condition of the child
- the circumstances surrounding the incident(s) of alleged or potential abuse
- the history of the child and family
- the potential danger to the child
- the potential of the family to provide a safe and healthy environment for the child.

These factors are more fully explained for purposes of reporting to the Child Abuse Register in Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register, CSD, COMSOC (February 1, 1981).

The determination of whether or not child abuse exists, whether it is considered 'serious' child abuse, and whether it should be reported to the Child Abuse Register rests on the considered judgement of the Society. If Societies are unsure about reporting they are invited to discuss specific situations with the Register.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is available for consultation

- all stages throughout the management of child abuse cases. This consultation may be obtained by the Children's Aid Society through any of the following:

- a) a Program Consultant
- b) Child Abuse Program Co-ordinator or Consultants
- c) Ministry of Community and Social Services, Legal Services Branch
- d) Child Abuse Register

In addition, the Ministry personnel contacted may be able to facilitate further consultation with other professionals with specific or additional expertise in child abuse.

B. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assessment Team

"Assessment team" refers generally to a group composed of professionals and consultants who, with their combinations of knowledge, skill and experience are able to provide a clearer understanding of a child and/or family. In these Standards and Guidelines the assessment team is usually the interdisciplinary child abuse team.

Case Conference

A case conference, in these Standards and Guidelines, refers to a meeting attended by as many people as possible involved in a case of child abuse for the purpose of evaluating facts and sharing professional opinions regarding a case of alleged abuse. Case conferences are consultative in nature, decision making resting with the Society's worker and supervisor.

The form of such a conference is determined by the need of the situation.

The following case conference models should be considered and the appropriate model utilized:

- 1) A conference with all case related staff including the Children's Aid Society supervisor (See "Case Supervision", Chapter 12, page 55).
- 2) A conference with the local child abuse team. In addition to regular team members the following persons should be in attendance:
 - Children's Aid Society protection worker
 - Children's Aid Society child care worker
 - Children's Aid Society supervisor (where appropriate)
 - Alternate care providers (where appropriate)
 - Any additional professionals involved in the assessment/investigation
 - Other professionals actively involved with the child/family
- 3) Where no formal child abuse team exists the case conference should include all professionals actively involved with the family, professionals who may not be actively involved but have significant data with respect to the family, a Children's Aid Society worker and a Children's Aid Society supervisor.

(Where possible, the multidisciplinary model (#2) is recommended.)

Alleged Child Abuse

This refers to reports or complaints made to the Children's Aid Society charging that child abuse has occurred. Child abuse has not been proven or admitted, rather it is said to be.

Child Abuse Register

The Child Abuse Register referred to in The Child Welfare Act, 1978 (S.52), is a central file in which all cases of verified child abuse are recorded specifically for purposes of monitoring, tracking and research. For reporting requirements **see** Section **52, The Child Welfare Act (1978)** and Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register. Children's Services Division, February, 1981.

Child Abuse

The definition of child abuse employed in these standards and guidelines is that used in Section 47 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978.

'Abuse' means any of the following conditions:

- (i) physical harm
- (ii) malnutrition or mental ill-health of a degree that if not immediately remedied could seriously impair growth and development or result in permanent injury or death
- (iii) sexual molestation

inflicted upon a child, or permitted to be inflicted upon a child by the child's parent or any person having the care, custody, control or charge of the child under sixteen years of age. (See Introduction, "The Determination of Child Abuse", page 2).

Child at Risk

This is a child who is exposed to the danger of incurring probable injury through child abuse.

Contact

This is a face-to-face meeting between a client (parent and/or child) and the worker. This usually takes place in the family's home, the Society's offices or the placement resource, but can be elsewhere.

Emergency Situation

An emergency situation means any situation in which a child's physical or emotional well-being (as defined in The Child Welfare Act, 1978, Section 47) appears to be in immediate danger.

High Risk

This refers to an environment which has been assessed by a social worker as one in which there is a probability that child abuse will occur. The child is endangered in such an environment.

Investigation

Investigation is the process of interviewing, observing, evidence gathering and assessing through which complaints of child abuse are verified or invalidated. See "Investigation" (Chapter 1, page 11).

Monitoring

This is an approach to overseeing the child in the child's environment with or without having direct contact with the child or family. It involves checking with other agencies and/or professionals who have regular contact with the child or family. Its purpose is to ascertain the condition of the child. The process of monitoring calls for much discretion on the part of the worker, sensitivity to professional ethics and respect for civil liberties and rights.

Parent

This is defined in The Child Welfare Act, 1978 s.19 and means

- i) a child's biological parent
- ii) a guardian

- iii) a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of the person's family, and
- iv) a person recognized under the Children's Law Reform Act as a "parent"
- v) a person who is not recognized in law to be a parent of a child but,
 1. has acknowledged a parental relationship to the child and has voluntarily provided for the child's care and support
 2. by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction or a written agreement, is under a legal duty to provide for the child or has been granted custody of or access to the child, or
 3. has made a written acknowledgement of the fact of his or her parentage to the society having or applying for the care or supervision of the child.

For a person to be found to have abused a child, that person must have a relationship with the child, and the abuse must occur within the context of this relationship. Normally, only someone who is in the role of parent or substitute parent can be found to be the abuser of the child in the intent of the legislation.

This does not imply that other persons who abuse children are excused, but other provisions such as those which describe a child in need of protection (The Child Welfare Act, 1978, Section 19) would apply. In these Standards and Guidelines the narrower definition of child abuse is used and this views the abuser as a parent or parent substitute. For a more detailed description of who is reportable to the Register as an alleged abuser, see Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register, Children's Services Division, February, 1981.

Place of Safety

The definition of "place of safety" employed in these Standards and Guidelines is that used in The Child Welfare Act, 1978 S.19(f) and means a receiving home, foster home, hospital, and such other place or class of places designated in writing by a Director, but does not include a training school under The Training Schools Act.

Safe Home

This is an environment which has been assessed by the social worker as one in which there is a good probability that child abuse will not occur.

Verification of the Information of Alleged Child Abuse

The Child Welfare Act, 1978, 52(2) directs every Society that receives information of child abuse shall, after the information is verified in the manner determined by the Director, report the information to the Director. The manner of reporting is the Form 6, Report to Child Abuse Register, which is a report of verified information concerning alleged abuse of a child. See "Verification of Information of Abuse" (Chapter 2, page 21), and Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register, CSD, COMSOC, (February, 1981).

Serious Child Abuse

The determination of the degree of seriousness of child abuse is a matter of judgement by the social worker which calls for expertise, experience and perspective. Since abuse is usually a condition, rather than an isolated incident, it must be seen in the context of the parent-child relationship, the degree of harm to the child, frequency and environment.

Suspected Child Abuse

This refers to those situations in which there may be no evidence of physical injury to the child but indicators of child abuse are present.

Standards

In this document, standards specify the procedures that are expected to be followed in a defined situation. Generally, Standards are the criteria against which the performance of persons, agencies or programs can be measured.

Standards must be expressed in precise, measurable terms. Standards for service delivery may address:

- the need for clearly defined descriptions of programs, and for consistency and congruence of the activities undertaken to deliver these programs
- a necessary minimum state or level of performance
- a required state or level of performance.

To have meaning as accountability measures, standards must be derived from the best existing knowledge, based on agreed-upon and precise definitions, and they must be enforceable and enforced.

Guidelines

Rather than standards, guidelines may be set out for several reasons:

- where standards cannot be expressed in precise, measurable terms; or measures could be defined but there is no universal agreement on values and practices
- to allow greater flexibility and discretion of practice
- to indicate a preferred practice that may become a standard when supporting performance measures are developed or professional consensus is reached on the best practice
- to indicate desired behaviour and interactions that cannot be thoroughly codified such as attitudes of affection, confidence and trust
- to indicate a desired state or level of performance.

1. INVESTIGATION

Commentary

Child abuse cases are given and should continue to be given the highest priority in the provision of Children's Aid Society service. The standards and guidelines written under this section describe a general process which should be followed by Societies in the investigation of all child abuse complaints or referrals. While it is desirable that Children's Aid Society intervention be as therapeutic as possible, the first priority during the process of investigating an alleged child abuse is to determine the child's need for protection.

Investigation

The process of investigation has four phases:

- 1) receipt of complaint
- 2) information gathering
- 3) assessment
- 4) verification of the information (Chapter 2).

Obtaining facts is necessary in order to make the correct assessment of a case; therefore, as extensive an evaluation as possible of a child's environment should be made to determine the appropriate service to be provided by the Children's Aid Society. In some instances, as in cases where there appears to be immediate danger to the child, it may not be possible to make the detailed recording of facts which are ultimately desired. (See "Record Keeping", Chapter 16, p. 65) Information is obtained from, but not limited to, record checks, interviews, observations, medical examinations, reports from other agencies, and examination of the child's environment.

The Child Welfare Act, 1978 makes provision for the Children's Aid Society to request information and reports from other agencies/professionals during the investigation process which will assist in determining the child's need for protection. Where the other agency refuses to share the information, the Children's Aid Society may seek a court order under Section 50 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978. It is reasonable to expect that in an effort to provide adequate service to children, close working relationships between the Children's Aid Societies and other service providers will exist. Where these relationships exist the use of Section 50 should be unnecessary.

If the child is felt to be at serious risk and the Children's Aid Society cannot obtain the desired information, it may be advisable to apprehend the child and obtain the necessary information later, through a subpoena rather than through use of Section 50.

Expertise on the part of the investigating social worker in acquiring information during the initial investigation phase is essential, since it is this information which provides the factual basis for good decision-making. Equally important is experience, continuing staff training and supervision. Information from the following specific areas should be considered. These broad areas serve simply as a guide to workers to assist them in exploring all the facts regarding a particular alleged child abuse:

- 1) Physical Indicators
- 2) Behaviour Indicators
- 3) Relationship Indicators
- 4) Specific Family Dynamics

The investigating social worker gathers information from as many relevant and appropriate sources as possible during the investigation process. No one fact or indicator can stand on its own, rather, assessment is based on careful study of all the known facts.

Verification of the information alleging child abuse may take place at any stage of the investigation if sufficient well-founded information is available. Generally, in complex cases a case conference is preferred, where all available information concerning the alleged abuse is shared and evaluated. This method, however, is not always possible or necessary.

IN-01 **General**

General

The role of the investigating worker is a dual one, its purpose being to serve the community by:

- 1) ensuring the protection of children
- 2) counselling children and families to safe, socially acceptable lives.

STANDARD

INS-01.1 All Children's Aid Society staff who carry out investigations, including after-hours staff, must be officers of the Society. This gives them the authority of the legislation to take whatever actions are necessary to ensure the safety of children believed to be in need of nrntertinn

IN-02 **Receipt of Complaint**

STANDARDS

- INS-02.1 The process of investigating a complaint of alleged child abuse shall be initiated within one hour after receipt of the report. (Note: This initial response process may take one of many forms, depending on the facts known. The minimum response is assignment of the complaint to a social worker for follow-up.)
- INS-02.2 Findings and actions taken in responding to complaints of child abuse shall be documented within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint. This documentation may be in the form of notes entered in the case notebook. (See RKS-01.6, page 65).
- INS-02.3 Police shall be informed of complaints received of alleged child abuse according to a predetermined plan that will have been worked out jointly by the police and local Children's Aid Society. (See "Police Involvement", Chapter 4, page 33, and "Case Supervision", Chapter 12, page 54)
- INS-02.4 When serious cases of child abuse, or death of a child from other than natural or accidental causes, come to the attention of the Children's Aid Society by unusual means, such as media reports, the Children's Aid Society shall initiate an investigation.

In some such instances the verification process may be limited to official police or coroner's records. If child abuse is verified a report should be submitted to the Central Register, even if the child who died was an only child, for the purpose of protecting possible future children.

In cases where a child has died as a result of abuse the Children's Aid Society should follow-up with an investigation to ensure that other children are not at risk.

Guideline

ING-02.1

Upon receipt of an initial complaint, as complete details as possible regarding the allegation will be obtained and recorded and will include as much as possible of the following:

- a) full name, age, birthdate, address, telephone number, religion of child
- b) full names, ages, addresses, telephone number, religion of parents
- c) current whereabouts of child
- d) current whereabouts of parents and how they can be contacted
- e) as complete details as possible of the alleged occurrence
- f) as complete details as possible of other incidents or suspicions of abuse
- g) names, ages and condition of siblings at home
- h) name, address, telephone number of other possible witnesses or persons having relevant information about the child/family, e.g., school, doctor, public health person, social service agencies, etc.
- i) name of family doctor
- j) names of other agencies knowledgeable about the family
- k) name of school, nursery, day care centre which child attends
- l) name, address, phone number of the complainant and relationship to the family reported
- m) some assessment of the motivation of the person making the complaint
- n) previous address or location of family.

IN-03 **Information Gathering Process**

Commentary

Respect for the rights and integrity of the client is essential to social work practice, since this is the foundation on which the client-social worker relationship is built. Informing the client about the need for and process of investigation is desirable practice.

STANDARDS

- INS-03.1 When the report is such that child abuse is suspected, wherever possible and practical initial steps in the investigation shall include:
- a) seeing the child alleged to have been abused, and interviewing the child if the child is old enough,
 - b) in-person interview with the child's parent(s)/caretaker(s).
- INS-03.2 When the results of these interviews indicate a probability that child abuse has occurred, as many as possible and practical of the relevant following interviews shall take place:
- a) interview with siblings
 - b) interview with the reporter of the abuse, where the identity of this person has been established
 - c) interview with other persons whom the facts indicate might have been witnesses
 - d) interview with other professionals knowledgeable about the family.
- INS-03.3 When child abuse is suspected, the following record checks shall be made and documented either at the initial response stage or later, but still early in the investigation process:
- a) a check of local Children's Aid Society records for previous service, allegations or incidents of child abuse
 - b) a check of records of the Child Abuse Register within 3 days.

INS-03.4 The child alleged to have been abused shall be seen as soon as possible. In every instance, the child will be seen no later than twelve hours after receipt of the complaint.

In remote areas of the province where distance or climate make it impossible for the worker to see the child within the time limit specified above, the Society should consider use of responsible local resources on an emergency basis for the purpose of assuring the immediate safety of the child. (Such resources would include the nearest police detachment, Public Health Nurse, or Indian Chief.) Whether this emergency check substantiates the abuse or not, the responsibility remains with the Children's Aid Society to see the child and proceed with the necessary investigation as soon as possible.

Part 1, Section 4(2) and Section 5, and Part II, Section 21 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978, provide for the authorization of a person by the local director of a Children's Aid Society to act on behalf of the society where a child is believed to be in need of protection.

INS-03.5 All actions taken during the investigation process will be documented as soon as possible and preferably within 24 hours. This documentation may be in the form of notes in the case note book. (See RKS-01.11, page 66).

INS-03.6 Where serious physical injury which is thought to be a consequence of abuse is suspected, a medical examination shall be arranged as soon as possible and preferably within 24 hours. Discretion shall be used relative to the needs and sex of the child if the investigating social worker elects to physically examine the child. Such examination shall take place only with the permission of the parents)/ca retaker (s) and in the presence of the parent(s)/caretaker(s). A record of such examination shall be documented.

INS-03.7 In all instances where serious physical injury thought to be a result of child abuse is suspected and where the parent refuses access to or examination of the child, the child shall be apprehended and examined by a community health professional. (See "Court Involvement", Chapter 5, page 37, "Police Involvement", Chapter 4, page 33, and The Child Welfare Act, 1978, Section 19(1)(b)(xi))

- INS-03.8 Where siblings are vulnerable they shall be seen and examined and results documented and where
- a) reporters suggest other children may be or have been abused
 - b) the information alleging abuse of the identified child is verified
 - c) present circumstances suggest other children have been or are being abused or at risk.
- INS-03.9 The examining doctor shall be advised that abuse is suspected and that a full and careful examination and report are required.
- INS-03.10 Where young children have been or likely have been seriously abused or where head or internal injuries are suggested, a skeletal survey by x-ray shall be requested.
- INS-03.11 The date, doctor's name and details of exactly what evidence of injury/neglect is found, as well as opinion of the cause, shall be obtained and recorded.
- INS-03.12 In all cases the worker shall learn of the doctor's findings directly, and not via the parent or any other person.
- INS-03.13 Where evidence suggests serious abuse has occurred, relevant reports shall be sought immediately from all professionals and agencies involved with the family. Where this information has been given verbally, the informant shall be requested to confirm the report in writing. Use of consents for release of information is expected wherever possible.

Guidelines

- ING-03.1 When child abuse is suspected, the initial investigation process will include the following when possible and practical:
- a) interview with the reporter of the alleged abuse, where the identity of the reporter is known
 - b) interview with siblings

- c) interview with other witnesses, relatives or neighbours who may have information concerning the alleged abuse
- d) interviews with other professionals knowledgeable about the family.

ING-03.2 When child abuse is suspected, the following record checks will be made and documented during the investigation process:

- a) check with Children's Aid Society in family's previous area(s) of residence
- b) check with other local agencies that have or may have had contact with the family.

ING-03.3 It is preferable that medical examinations be done by a pediatrician who is experienced with child abuse cases. If this is not possible, the following are alternatives:

- 1) the child's own family doctor
- 2) emergency department of nearest hospital
- 3) a doctor with whom the Children's Aid Society has a special working relationship
- 4) a doctor on a child abuse team
- 5) any other available doctor.

ING-03.4 In ensuring that the child has a medical examination either of the following approaches is used:

- a) the child and parent(s)/caretaker(s) will be accompanied to the medical examination by the worker
- b) in situations where the parent(s)/caretaker(s) is agreeable to the medical examination of the child but is unable or unwilling to be present, the child will be accompanied by the worker with a signed agreement from the parents)/caretaker(s).

ING-03.5 Where possible, in serious child abuse cases, both colour and black-and-white photographs will be taken of all relevant child abuse evidence. Photographs will also be taken of all physical injuries in child abuse cases where the child is apprehended or admitted to hospital. These photographs will be taken by a professionally qualified photographer since they may be used as evidence. Professional photographers are often available to Societies through the local police or hospital facilities.

- ING-03.6 The doctor, nurse or other medical person will be advised that he/she may be required to give evidence in court.
- ING-03.7 Where the worker is reasonably convinced that child abuse has occurred and the doctor making the examination is unable or unwilling to make a formal diagnosis indicating the possibility of child abuse, a second opinion or examination will be considered.
- ING-03.8 Where appropriate, admission to hospital as a place of safety, assessment and treatment will be considered during the investigation/assessment process.

IN-04 **Assessment**

Assessment is a disciplined process which includes the thoughtful integration of facts and observations. It is the means by which all known data from significant sources are weighed, and strengths and limitations considered. Assessment results in conclusions that form the basis of a treatment plan. (See Clinical Assessment in Children's Services, CSD, April, 1979).

A formal assessment of the child and family could take place through one of the following:

- 1) the Children's Aid Society professionals
- 2) court may order an assessment, after finding a child in need of protection to assist the court in making a disposition. (Section 29, The Child Welfare Act, 1978.)
- 3) expertise of a local child abuse team, e.g., pediatric examination, psychiatric consultation, etc.
- 4) through referral or utilization of existing community agencies, e.g., mental health clinic.
- 5) psychological/developmental/pediatric assessment of children who are admitted to a hospital or other places of safety.

The assessment of a child who is in the care of a Society may be undertaken without a court order prior to the finding that the child is in need of protection.

As a result of this assessment, a plan should be devised which represents the application of judgement, experience and knowledge in using the information available to determine what are realistic and attainable goals and how they may be achieved.

STANDARD

INS-04.1 An assessment process shall take place as soon as sufficient facts have been gathered to understand the situation and to develop a beginning service plan. An outline of the assessment process shall be recorded in the case file.

INS-04.2 A service treatment plan shall be developed and shall be stated in writing in the file and shall be set within a time frame and revised as necessary as a result of additional information or changed circumstances in the case. (See "Case Supervision", Chapter 12, page 54, and "Case Review", Chapter 13, page 56)

Guidelines

ING-4.1 Where practicable and appropriate the investigating social worker and/or supervisor, will call a case conference for the purposes of making an assessment of the child's situation, to determine whether the child has been abused or is at risk and to develop a service plan for the child and the family.

ING-4.2 Initial observations and family assessment will include:

- 1) An assessment of both parents (present emotional health; ability to cope with stress; relationship with spouse, child, extended family, friends and neighbourhood).
- 2) Significant information about the child, and the child's role in the family (emotional state; relationship with parents, siblings, school, other children and adults).
- 3) Home, environment/neighbourhood assessment (condition of home; support systems available to the family; current family stresses).
- 4) Information and assessments from all involved professionals.

- 5) Diagnostic impressions. (Do parents have potential to abuse? Is child in some way different or difficult? Are there precipitating crises which can trigger abuse? Is the child safe in the home?)
6. Consultation (with supervisor, child abuse team, etc.).
7. Plan of action (immediate or longer term).

2. VERIFICATION OF THE INFORMATION OF ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE

In addition to the following, Societies should be familiar with the Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register, CSD, (February, 1981). Societies are also invited to consult with the Child Abuse Register at any stage of the verification process.

Commentary

The Child Welfare Act, 1978, 52(2) directs that every Society that receives information of child abuse shall, after the information is verified in the manner determined by the Director, (of Child Welfare) report the information to the Director. The manner of reporting is the Form 6, Report to Child Abuse Register, which is a report of verified information concerning alleged child abuse.

Evaluating the 'seriousness' of alleged abuse in order to determine whether it warrants a report to the Child Abuse Register requires careful assessment and the common sense judgement of the Society. Too broad an interpretation of the abuse definitions will inundate the Register with reports and thereby undermine its effectiveness as a monitoring tool. On the other hand, too narrow an interpretation will exclude from the Register those cases which should rightfully be tracked, and diminish its effectiveness altogether. The task of a Children's Aid Society is to achieve a balance between these two extremes, guided by the specific circumstances and history of each case. For example, a single bruise does not as a general rule constitute 'abuse' which should be reported to the Register. However, it may warrant a report if it is the result of a series of incidents which border on the excessive use of force, or which indicate that harm is repeatedly permitted.

When Societies are unsure about whether a situation is reportable or not they are free to discuss the case with the Registrar.

Since the Society may be required to bring forward evidence as to its verification procedure in a subsequent expunction hearing, it is important that the verification process be as complete and well-documented as possible.

VE-01 **Verification of the Information of Child Abuse**

Commentary

Information of alleged child abuse is verified and reportable once the Local Director of the Children's Aid Society, on the basis of his Society's investigation and consultation with other professionals (if appropriate), has reasonable grounds to believe that the child is or has been abused or that a strong ongoing potential for abuse exists in the child's environment.

STANDARDS

- VES-01.1 Reports of all verified cases of child abuse shall be forwarded by the Local Director to the Central Register (Form 6) within 14 days of verification.
- VES-01.2 See INS-02.4 (page 13) for verification when the usual investigation process may not be possible.

Guidelines

- VEG-01.1 In all situations, it is recommended that in the deliberations for verification, the Society will:
- a) ascertain the welfare of the child
 - b) review all relevant information obtained from the investigation/assessment
 - c) determine the facts obtained in the investigation that support or refute the allegations in the complaint, and/or additional allegations of abuse arising from the investigation
 - d) list all evidence/proof obtained in the investigation/assessment that substantiate the facts in b) above
 - e) review all professional opinions which pertain to the existence of child abuse in the particular case
 - f) list all the factors which support the judgements
 - g) list all factors which do not support the judgements
 - h) document all of the above including reasons for the decision.

- VEG-01.2 Where the information of child abuse is verified, the following will then be determined:
- a) the child's immediate condition at home
 - b) the court process to be followed (see "Police Involvement" Chapter 4, page 33) and "Court Involvement" Chapter 5, page 37)
 - c) further investigatory/assessment steps to be undertaken
 - d) any treatment/management recommendations
 - e) any case monitoring strategies.

3. CASE MANAGEMENT

Commentary

During investigation of an alleged child abuse as well as during any continuing work with the family, the social worker has the task of ensuring the safety of the child, fulfilling the requirements of the legislation, and at the same time establishing and maintaining a relationship with the family that is conducive to the family's change and growth.

Approaches to this complex role will vary and will depend on the needs and capacities of the particular family and the resources available, including the skills of the worker. The Ministry's Training Program for Front-Line Protection Staff, Volumes I and II, CSD, contain much useful information designed to help workers to identify and use appropriate approaches.

Whatever approach, or method, is used in helping families, when this is in the context of a child protection service, there is one common, overriding element. This is the legally mandated responsibility to ensure the safety of the child. This legal basis bestows upon the worker the authority of the legislation, and it is the presence of this authority that sets protection work apart from other kinds of helping services. A major skill, and a challenge for the worker, is to use authority in such a way that it becomes an integral part of the total helping process.

Following the completion of a child abuse investigation, one of six outcomes is possible:

- 1) Child abuse does not appear to exist.
- 2) Child abuse does not appear to exist but the family requests or agrees to Children's Aid Society services.
- 3) There exists some substantive grounds to believe that the child is abused, but there is not sufficient grounds for verification of the information and the child remains with the parents.
- 4) There exists some substantive grounds to believe that the child is abused and there are not sufficient grounds for verification of the information but this and/or other factors warrant the removal of the child to a place of safety.

- 5) There is verification of the information of abuse; the child remains with the parents.
- 6) There is verification of the information of abuse; the situation warrants the child be removed to a place of safety.

Each of these decisions requires a specific form of case management by the Children's Aid Society. In some situations another agency may assume, in co-operation with the Children's Aid Society, partial responsibility for the care/treatment of a child. However, regardless of service assignments, the ultimate responsibility for protection and case management rests with the Children's Aid Society.

CM-01 **Child Abuse Does Not Appear to Exist**

STANDARDS

- CMS-01.1 Where the identity of the person who made the complaint is known, this source shall be thanked for their interest, and informed in general terms about the Society's response to their concern.
- CMS-01.2 Documentation of the investigation process and reasons behind disposition shall be made and placed in the file as soon as possible and preferably within twenty-one days of receipt of the complaint.
- CMS-01.3 When no evidence of child abuse can be substantiated, the family shall be advised of the disposition within fourteen days of completion of the investigation. Where it appears there may be family problems, the Society's services (including referral service) will be explained and offered. If it is the family's wish not to continue service, the case will be closed and the family so informed.
- CMS-01.4 Upon completion of the investigation, if it is believed that the complaint was made maliciously or without reasonable grounds: to suspect that the information is true, Section 49(3) of The Child Welfare Act, 1978, directs that the file shall clearly indicate this finding. In addition, the complainant shall be contacted and informed of this finding. Consideration shall be given to filing a complaint of the offence with the police, Section 94(a) of The Child Welfare Act, 1978.

Guideline

CMG-01.1 Reporting back is one of the most effective ways of keeping the community informed of action taken when complaints are lodged. However, professional discretion is expected in communicating the disposition of a case to significant reporting sources and/or other agencies involved in the investigating process. This also applies to those cases in which child abuse is suspected and where there is verification of the information alleging child abuse.

CM-02 **Child Abuse is Suspected**

STANDARDS

CMS-02.1 Following investigation/assessment where:

- a) child abuse is suspected but not substantiated, the child does not appear to be at risk, and the family does not wish continuing service, the case will be closed
- b) child abuse is suspected but not substantiated, and the family agrees to continuing service, the case will be opened for continuing service, or referred to the appropriate resource
- c) child abuse is suspected but not substantiated and it is thought that risk may exist for the child and the family has refused service, the family will be advised of the suspicion of child abuse and that the condition of the child will be monitored through other appropriate services.

CMS-02.2 The Children's Aid Society shall arrange either to see the child directly or to see that monitoring takes place by alerting other resources (e.g., school, doctor, public health nurse) of the suspicion of child abuse and the Society's inability to proceed due to lack of evidence. The CAS will request that the other resources inform them if they have cause for concern.

The Children's Aid Society will also request to be informed if the family terminates services with that resource or moves, so that monitoring may continue through other appropriate channels.

- CMS-02.3 Arrangements made for monitoring a suspected case of child abuse by other professionals or resources shall be confirmed in writing by the Children's Aid Society and recorded on file.
- CMS-02.4 Where child abuse is suspected and there exists reasonable and probable grounds that the child is in need of protection for it is believed that the abuse is of a serious nature and the child continues to be at risk and all other feasible measures have been rejected, the child shall be apprehended and a report recorded of why this action was taken in order to:
- a) protect the child
 - b) complete the investigation/assessment
 - c) allow the courts to make a final disposition on the basis of available evidence.

Guideline

CMG-02.7 See CMS-01.4.

CM-03 The Information of Child Abuse is Verified

Commentary

High expectation is placed on the Children's Aid Society when a child who has been seriously abused is returned to a home that is not considered to be safe. In these circumstances all practical monitoring systems are used in addition to intensified visiting. The purpose of the visits and of seeing the child at each one must be made clear to parents. Any deviation in the family's usual patterns of behaviour should be cause for concern. Should there be an indication of further abuse, the child should be brought into care immediately.

In cases where the information alleging serious child abuse is verified, the following standards and guidelines will apply.

STANDARDS

- CMS-03.1 When the child for whom the information of child abuse has been verified remains in the home and that home is considered unsafe, there must be regular contact by a Children's Aid Society worker or other agency at an agreed upon frequency. Initially the child must be seen at least weekly.
- The frequency of such visits may be relaxed as professional opinion supports a less intensive contact. Such advice would consider the vulnerability and degree of risk to the child and the process of change in the child's environment.
- CMS-03.2 Where the child is very young or particularly vulnerable, regular physical examinations shall be scheduled at reasonable intervals to ensure the safety of the child. These are to be conducted by a community health professional (either a qualified public health nurse or doctor). The frequency of these examinations will be established with the health professional and recorded.
- CMS-03.3 These contacts (CMS-03.1 and CMS-03.2) will continue until the case is transferred or terminated or until the home is considered to be safe for the child, in the opinion of the Children's Aid Society.
- CMS-03.4 A missed contact by the family shall be seen as a potential danger signal and shall be followed up as soon as possible. Under no circumstances will the contact be dropped until the next regular time.
- CMS-03.5 If a worker is unavailable and has to miss a contact the family shall be notified and arrangements to make the contact, either by the worker or a substitute, will be made as soon as possible, dictated by the degree of risk to the child.
- CMS-03.6 Where another professional/agency is providing additional service the Children's Aid Society shall:
- a) determine clearly which professional/agency is assuming the additional treatment role and the extent of that agency's responsibility

- b) determine the treatment plan, and ensure that the other agency has a clear agreement with the family for service
- c) determine that the other professional/agency will obtain and provide information regarding incidents or suspicion of further abuse, any withdrawal, avoidance or termination of service, or removal of the family to another location, or lack of access to the child, and
- d) ensure that a) b) and c) are confirmed in writing.

CMS-03.7 Where the child remains in a home that is not considered safe and another professional/agency is providing the major service, the Children's Aid Society shall ensure that the professional/agency has direct access to the child and that the child is seen at the same frequency as expected of the Children's Aid Society (see CMS-03.1) and that regular physical examinations are carried out as required (see CMS-03.2), and the child's condition reported to the Children's Aid Society. Failure of the professional/agency to comply with these terms of contact will necessitate direct involvement of the Children's Aid Society.

CMS-03.8 The Children's Aid Society shall ensure regular contact with the other agencies which are providing the major service at a minimum of every three months and shall document results of such contact.

CMS-03.9 Where information of abuse has been verified a report (Form 6) shall be submitted to the Director under sub-section (2) of Section 52 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978, within fourteen days. When the case remains open with the Society, a "follow-up report" (Form 7) shall be made within four months after the making of the original report. Subsequent reports to the Director shall be made on each anniversary of the original report until the case is closed by the Society. (See Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register, CSD, COMSOC, February, 1981, and "Verification of the Information of Alleged Child Abuse", Ch. 2, page 23).

Guideline

CMG-03.1 Clients will be advised as soon as possible of a report to the Central Register of Child Abuse. They will also be advised if the Central Register reports a former verification.

4. POLICE INVOLVEMENT

Commentary

Both the Children's Aid Societies and the police have the function of serving and protecting. The Children's Aid Societies provide service and protection to children under the mandate of child welfare legislation, while police authority derives from the Criminal Code.

Although approaches to how each service carries out its function vary, the similarities are marked, and in many communities both services are jointly involved in the investigation of reports of abuse, protection of children and in the provision of service to families and children.

Since both the Children's Aid Society and the police have legal responsibilities in the area of child abuse and both have much to contribute to the investigation and management of these cases, it is important that a working partnership be developed between the two services. Guidelines forming the basis of such a partnership were formulated by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of the Solicitor General and were distributed to police and Children's Aid Societies. While it is recognized that local partnership arrangements will vary greatly, it is expected that a spirit of mutual co-operation will be developed and that the best interests of both the child and the community will be promoted.

Some relevant provisions of law are as follows:

- 1) Section 47 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978 provides the definition of abuse which is contained in the glossary.
- 2) A "child in need of protection" is defined in section 19 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978.
- 3) Responsibilities of the Children's Aid Society and police are set out in section 21 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978 and in certain other sections.
- 4) Relevant offences are outlined under both the Criminal Code of Canada and The Child Welfare Act, 1978.

PO-01 **Police Involvement**

STANDARDS

- POS-01.1 A plan shall be developed jointly by the local Children's Aid Society and the police to ensure that there is a cooperative working agreement. This working agreement will include plans for the mutual sharing of information of complaints of suspected child abuse.
- POS-01.2 Where the police are involved in an investigation of alleged child abuse, primary responsibility for the protection of the child shall remain with the local Children's Aid Society.
- POS-01.3 Primary responsibility for the enforcement of law and the prosecution of offences shall remain with the police.

Guidelines

- POG-01.1 At the time of notification and consultation, a decision will be made regarding the most appropriate and effective means of investigation.
- Possibilities are:
- a) investigation by the Children's Aid Society
 - b) parallel Children's Aid Society/police investigation
 - c) joint Children's Aid Society/police investigation.
- POG-01.2 There will be mutual sharing of relevant information respecting the investigation.
- POG-01.3 The working agreement will include a plan for consultation between the two services and other involved professionals when the police are considering a criminal prosecution, and before the laying of charges.
- POG-01.4 Children's Aid Societies and police will both be involved in local Child Abuse Teams and conferences on cases of child abuse.

- POG-01.5 Children's Aid Societies and police will work together to develop a better understanding of each other's concerns, responsibilities and problems.
- POG-01.6 Children's Aid Societies and police will exchange information and training materials on child abuse.
- POG-01.7 Children's Aid Societies and police will ensure that social workers, physicians, nurses, lawyers, judges and teachers in the community are kept informed of all aspects of child abuse, including indicators, investigation, reporting legislation and referral procedures.

5. COURT INVOLVEMENT

Commentary

Every Local Director and every person designated by the Board of Directors of a Society has the powers of a school attendance counselor under The Education Act, 1974, and a police officer. Any one of them shall be deemed to be an officer within the meaning of Section 10 of The Public Authority's Protection Act, and that section and the other provisions of that Act apply to them in the same manner and to the same extent as they do to the officers mentioned in The Child Welfare Act, 1978, s4(2). Thus a protection services social worker who is a legal officer of the Children's Aid Society may apprehend a child apparently in need of protection with or without a warrant or may apply to a court for an order requiring the person in whose charge the child is to produce the child before a court at the time and place named in the order (The Child Welfare Act, 1978, s21(1)).

Section 47 of The Child Welfare Act, 1978 provides for the laying of charges in certain cases involving child abuse. These charges are heard in Provincial Court (Family Division). Criminal charges under the Criminal Code of Canada are heard in the Provincial Court (Criminal Division).

Civil liability involves an application in civil court to effect recovery of damages or compensation on behalf of an abused child. The Child Welfare Act, 1978 s.51 provides for such proceedings, or disposition may be sought under The Compensation for Victims Act. If either the Official Guardian or Children's Aid Society believe it to be in the best interests of the child, proceedings may be instituted and conducted on the child's behalf in respect of the abuse suffered.

In the pursuit to find a child in need of protection, various orders are permitted through application to the family court. An Order to Produce requires that the person(s) in whose care the child is bring the child before the court, and an Order of Society Supervision ensures upon court order, that the Children's Aid Society is involved in the care and management of the child. These procedures are discussed in the following standards and guidelines.

The Child Welfare Act, 1978 section 20 makes provision for independent legal representation of the child.

CI-01 Court Involvement

STANDARDS

CIS-01.1 In cases where child abuse has occurred and the child requires admission to care, the child shall be apprehended with or without warrant and taken to a place of safety.

Temporary care by agreement shall only be considered in those unique cases where it is therapeutically indicated, that is, the family and social worker have a shared recognition of the problem and the family is motivated and has demonstrated a capacity to do something about the problem, thereby ensuring the safety of the child. Normally, on expiry of an agreement for care, the expectation is that the child would be returned to the family. Guidelines for the use of agreements for care can be found in Protection and Care of Children, The Child Welfare Act, 1978, Part II, Training Materials. CSD, January 1979.

CIS-01.2 In all child abuse cases where a child has been apprehended and has been in care, and where a recommendation of a return to parent(s) or other suitable person is made, consideration should be given to a request for an Order of Supervision.

CIS-01.3 When Children's Aid Society supervision is being proposed the Society shall make specific reasonable recommendations to the court regarding the supervision of parent(s) and child, which may be accepted by the judge and included in the terms and conditions stated in the Court Order. These shall be documented and followed by the Society providing supervision.

Guidelines

CIG-01.1 In cases where the information of abuse is verified and the parents are unco-operative but the degree of abuse or risk does not require immediate apprehension or placement outside the home, an Order to Produce will be sought. An application for supervision should be given serious consideration.

CIG-01.2 The decision regarding court involvement (whether to apprehend, seek wardship, the child remaining at home, requests for an Order to Produce or an Order of Society Supervision, etc.), will be based on a full review with the supervisor (see "Case Supervision", Chapter 12, page 55) with the advantage of the consultative input from a case conference (see Glossary of Terms for details of Case Conference).

CI-02 **Apprehension**

Apprehension is the taking (by force if necessary) of a child considered to be in need of protection into the care of the Children's Aid Society. Apprehension takes place when a child's safety is not ensured and a high degree of risk appears to exist.

STANDARD

CIS-02.1 The police shall be involved in situations where the use of force may be required to seek for or effect the apprehension of a child. (CWA, 1978, Section 21)

Guidelines

CIG-02.1 Emergency apprehension of a child who is in immediate danger and in need of protection may occur with or without a warrant. The warrant is used as a means of securing entry or access if someone is obstructing a Society's apprehension of the child. The warrant issued by the court is to be exercised for the specific purpose of searching for the child and detaining him, once found, in a place of safety.

CIG-02.2 Some typical situations for which emergency apprehension is warranted are:

There is reason to believe the child is endangered and,

- a) the parents or others refuse entry
- b) the parents or others refuse access to the child
- c) the parents or others refuse to co-operate in effecting a physical or medical examination
- d) the parents or others attempt to hide the child

- e) the parents or others and child may abscond or disappear
- f) the child is alone in locked premises
- g) the parent(s)/caretaker(s) appears highly disturbed or unstable.

CIG-02.3 Warrants will be used to apprehend a child where the child is in long-term, rather than immediate danger and the parents refuse to give consent to the removal of the child.

CIG-02.4 Warrants may be used for children who are hospitalized as a result of child abuse to enable the hospital to detain the child.

CI-03 **Supervision Orders**

STANDARDS

CIS-03.1 The primary responsibility to carry out the Order of Supervision shall be with the Children's Aid Society no matter what form the supervision of the child takes.

CIS-03.2 In situations where supervision orders are "frustrated" (e.g., parents refuse to cooperate, Children's Aid Society unable to effect, etc.) the matter shall be returned to Court immediately for further review and where the child may be endangered, the child shall be apprehended and reasons for the decision documented.

CIS-03.3 The Society shall seek to have the Court write the terms and conditions and what is expected of the Children's Aid Society into any Supervision Orders, and to make these known to any person who will be affected by them. (See The Child Welfare Act 1978, Section 30(4)).

CIS-03.4 The supervision of the child shall involve contact with the child for a length of time and at intervals as ordered by the Court. Where the Court has not specified the frequency of contact with the child and with the family this shall be determined by the Society. Frequency of such contacts will vary and will be dependent on the vulnerability of the child (e.g., presence of monitoring sources, age of child, etc.). Determination of frequency will be made in consultation with the supervisor and will be recorded.

CIS-03.5 In situations involving supervision orders, the Children's Aid Society's review of these cases shall be conducted as specified under "Case Supervision", which requires review at certain critical times.

Guidelines

CIG-03.1 Where an order of wardship has been refused by the Court but the Society believes that the child is still at serious risk, an appeal will be taken by the Society rather than returning the child to the parent under a Supervision Order.

CIG-03.2 Society supervision will be complimented by physical examinations by a community health professional (a qualified public health nurse or doctor) at intervals which ensure the safety of the child.

CIG-03.3 Other agencies will be asked to assist in the supervision of the child (e.g., public health, day care, school, family doctor).

CIG-03.4 Where arrangements under the above are made, roles in the shared supervision of the child will be documented, and the responsibility for reporting and consulting clearly outlined and undertaken. (See CMS-03.6, page 31).

CI-04 **Legal Counsel**

STANDARD

CIS-04.1 The Children's Aid Society shall be represented either by legal counsel or by an experienced court worker in all contested child abuse cases where the child would be at serious risk if the application should fail. Guidelines related to the use of legal counsel have been prepared by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and should be used to determine the use of legal counsel.

Guidelines

- CIG-04.1 Where a child has been apprehended and admitted to care in a child abuse situation, the Children's Aid Society will consider whether or not to make a recommendation to the court for independent legal representation for the child (see The Child Welfare Act, 1978, s. 20).
- CIG-04.2 Community child abuse teams will make every effort to include a lawyer as a team member.

CI-05 **Case Review**

Case review is a general survey and critical evaluation of factors in a case, and is the method by which workers, supervisors and other professionals involved in a child abuse case may examine movement and evaluate or modify a case plan.

STANDARD

- CIS-05.1 There shall be a full review by the Children's Aid Society of each case in advance of all scheduled court hearings.

Guidelines

- CIG-05.1 The review process will follow the same procedures as a case conference and will include a review of the decision regarding the type of court involvement recommended.
- CIG-05.2 Legal counsel for the Children's Aid Society will be present at the review where counsel has been or is likely to be involved in the case. The purpose of legal counsel is to advise and consult on matters affecting the legal aspects of the case. Decisions regarding case management rest with the social worker and supervisor.

6. REMOVAL OF CHILD

Commentary

The removal of the child from the family/caretaker is an action which requires the most serious consideration. The possible effects of leaving the child in the home must be weighed against the possible effects of removal, and the kinds of help that can be provided. Ideally, removal of a child from the home is part of a planned process, with the parent(s) and the child fully involved, and with supervisory consultation throughout. Emergency apprehension should be very rare, but even in these instances consultation with a supervisor should be obtained.

Usually the decision to take a child into care is considered only after other measures have been tried or considered, and rejected. These measures would include provision of services in the home, the use of other resources to alleviate the situation, or supervision of the child in the home under a court order. The central issue in these considerations is how best to provide the care needed with the minimum risk to the child.

Children are brought into care in three ways:

- 1) temporary care by agreement
- 2) an Order to Produce is sought from the Court directing the child's parent(s)/caretaker(s) to produce him before the Court for a determination of his need for protection, or
- 3) apprehension.

The statutory responsibility of the Society is to assess the child's need for protection and to act to assure the child's safety. If evidence suggests that the child would be endangered if left in the home, and other recourses are not possible, the decision must be made whether to remove the child immediately, with or without warrant, or to leave the child in the home pending the court's adjudication of whether or not the child is in need of protection. In the latter case the Society asks the Court for an Order to Produce, which requires that the parent(s)/caretaker(s) produce the child before a Court at a time and place stated in the Order.

Supervisory consultation as a requirement in the decision-making process takes place through a case conference, consultation with a child abuse team or through individual consultation with the supervisor.

RC-01 **Removal of Child**

STANDARD

RCS-01.1 Prior to removing a child from the home, the Children's Aid Society shall consider the possibility of service being provided in the home or the community by the Society or by another agency.

7. RETURN OF CHILD

Commentary

The decision to return a child to the child's own home, after having been in care, must be considered very carefully. In most cases, return of the child is the goal of all the work with the family and with the child. Return of the child is a process which involves preparation of the child and of the family and involvement of the substitute parents.

The decision to return the child should involve the supervisor as well as any other persons who are in a position to add useful information. These would include substitute parents or institution staff, child care workers, homemakers as well as workers having direct responsibility for the family. (See Case Supervision, Ch. 12, p.54)

Many factors will be considered as this decision is made. These include the family's ability to provide a safe environment for this particular child, the child's readiness to return, the vulnerability of the child and the presence of monitoring sources, availability of support systems for the family, timing, etc.

RP-01 **Return of Child**

STANDARDS

- RPS-01.1 The Ministry shall be informed when the Court has ordered that the child be returned to the parents and it is the Society's opinion that the child is still at risk. (See Guidelines and Procedures for the Reporting and Follow-Up of Serious Occurrences, CSD, October, 1979)
- RPS-01.2 In controversial or particularly problematic cases the Program Advisor shall be advised (see "Reporting to the Ministry", Chapter 10, page 50).
- RPS-01.3 In cases where there has been verification of the information of child abuse and a child has been admitted to care and subsequently returned home by the Court, the Children's Aid Society should request that the Court specify the period of follow-up. In such instances the Society recommends frequency of contact based on what is necessary to ensure the safety of the child.

8. LOST CHILD

Commentary

This section refers to those active cases in which a child who is considered to be at risk because it is suspected that serious abuse has occurred, or for whom there has been verification of the information of abuse, is lost or missing. The lost child may or may not be in agency care.

LC-01 **Lost Child**

STANDARDS

- LCS-01.1 Every reasonable effort shall be made by the Children's Aid Society to discover the whereabouts of the missing child and to ensure that the child is adequately protected.
- LCS-01.2 Immediate notification must be made to the Children's Aid Society Supervisor and Local Director.
- LCS-01.3 Immediate notification must be made to the parent(s) and all known caretakers.
- LCS-01.4 The police shall be notified as soon as possible and no later than twenty-four hours after receipt of the information.
- LCS-01.5 Where "lost" children were subject to supervisory orders, the Children's Aid Society shall inform the court of the child's disappearance.
- LCS-01.6 In urgent cases with specific clues as to the child's whereabouts, the appropriate child welfare agency shall be advised by phone with the request for immediate assistance and action.
- LCS-01.7 Any significant new information shall be communicated to the police and/or other appropriate child welfare agencies.
- LCS-01.8 The local Children's Aid Society shall continue to monitor and document such efforts to locate the "lost" child for a period of time which is determined by the known degree of risk to the child.

9. MISSING FAMILY

Commentary

The question of at what point a family is considered missing rather than temporarily out of touch will depend on the known facts about the family and the seriousness of the situation. In high risk situations any missed contact would be followed up immediately (See CMS-03.4, page 31), while the length of time for follow-up of less urgent cases would vary.

This section is concerned with those active cases where a family for whom the Children's Aid Society is providing or co-ordinating protection services cannot be located. The major reason for attempting to locate such families is that their disappearance may indicate that further child abuse has occurred.

The following indicators require action to determine whether or not the child/family is lost or missing:

- 1) the family or child does not keep an agreed-upon contact
- 2) the child/family are not engaging in their normal contacts (e.g., child missing from school, parent absent from work, did not keep appointment with agency providing service (including the Children's Aid Society))
- 3) family home is locked and apparently abandoned
- 4) family or child cannot be reached between agreed-upon contacts
- 5) relative, friend or some other person reports their absence and the agency has not been given any reason for their absence.

MF-01 **Missing Family**

STANDARDS

MFS-01.1 Every reasonable effort shall be made by the Children's Aid Society to discover the whereabouts of the missing family and to resume service.

MFS-01.2 Immediate notification shall be to the Children's Aid Society supervisor and Local Director

- MFS-01.3* Immediate notification shall be made to the Central Register where a child is at risk. In such cases the Central Register has made a practice of sending out alerts in regard to a missing family. The reporting agency shall notify the Central Register by a letter which shall identify the family and briefly outline the salient content of the case in the manner to be forwarded by the Central Register in their alert to other agencies, provinces and/or countries as indicated by the letter of notification.
- MFS-01.4* Notification shall be made to known associate agencies, including police, in the local Children's Aid Society's area of jurisdiction, of the need to locate the family and the request that the Children's Aid Society be immediately notified of the family's whereabouts if located.

10. REPORTING TO THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Commentary

In addition to reporting to the Central Register the "Verification of Information of Child Abuse" (see Chapter 2, page 23), "Lost Child" (see Chapter 8, page 47), and "Missing Family" (see Chapter 9, page 48), certain other situations must be reported.

Guidelines and Procedures for the Reporting and Follow-Up of Serious Occurrences. CSD, (October 1979) have been developed in order to provide a consistent basis for communication of serious occurrences so that both the Ministry and agencies are aware of what has happened and have agreed upon an appropriate follow-up. This publication has been distributed and is available through the Ministry and therefore will not be repeated in full in this document.

The document sets out procedures for the investigation within the agency of any serious occurrence and the reporting procedure to the Ministry. Options for fuller investigation have been established and will be decided upon in consultation with the Ministry. These options are:

1. The agency assumes responsibility for the matter, with or without the support of the Program Supervisor.
2. An investigation is carried out by the Ministry's "Investigation Unit" with the Program Supervisor.
3. An investigation of the serious occurrence by an Investigation Committee.

Listed below are definitions of "serious occurrences" which are to be reported by the agency director to the Ministry. It is recognized that judgements about reporting call for good, common sense and that there may be some modification in the definitions after a few month's experience.

STANDARD

- RMS-01.1 The following are defined as "serious occurrences" and shall be reported to the Ministry in accordance with the procedures established:

- 1) All deaths of children in care including death resulting from abuse, accident, suicide, medical or non-accidental causes.
- 2) All injuries to children in care that are judged to be of a serious nature by the Agency Director. In determining whether the injury is serious, the Director should take into consideration such issues as whether the injuries are non-accidental or unexplained.
- 3) All allegations and accusations of abuse or mistreatment of children in care including injuries complained of by children where abuse or mistreatment by staff is suspected. In addition, this would include situations where injuries are caused by the neglect of the caretaker.
- 4) Grievances made by or about children in care when judged to be of a serious nature by the Agency Director, e.g. grievances involving inappropriate use of detention, etc.
- 5) Complaints made about operational and/or physical standards of agencies when judged to be of a serious nature, e.g. fire safety, hygiene, staff ratios, etc.
- 6) All allegations and accusations against staff, foster parents, volunteers, babysitters and temporary caretakers of children, when judged to be serious by the Agency Director (including those attributable to the use of specific clinical techniques, apparatus or facilities of a clinical or educational nature).
- 7) All disasters such as fire, riots, in the Agency.
- 8) All cases involving a major public breach of confidentiality, e.g., improper or unauthorized release of records.

In the case of agencies such as Children's Aid Societies it is expected that, as is generally the case now, those in charge of the agency will follow-up on serious matters, reporting the outcome to the Division. An investigation will be ordered only where the nature of the occurrence, or special concerns about the circumstances surrounding the incident, or the ability of the agency to respond to it, justifies such action. Throughout the process, the independent nature of the agency will be recognized and supported.

11. DEATHS OF CHILDREN

Commentary

The standards outlined in this section are designed to assist the Children's Aid Society in the management of cases where children receiving service from the Society die as a result of suspected or verified information of child abuse.

DC-01 **Deaths of Children**

STANDARDS

- DCS-01.1 The Children's Aid Society shall make immediate contact with the local law enforcement agency regarding details, possible charges and the conducting of an investigation into the death of a child. This contact shall be made no later than one hour after receiving the initial report (see "Police Involvement", Chapter 4, page 33).
- DCS-01.2 The Children's Aid Society supervisor and/or Local Director shall be advised of the death of a child within one hour of the receipt of the information by any Society staff member.
- DCS-01.3 The Ministry of Community and Social Services shall be advised of a child's death as soon as possible within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the information. (See "Guidelines and Procedures for the Reporting and Follow-Up of Serious Occurrences", CSD, COMSOC, October, 1979)
- DCS-01.4 In cases where death is alleged to be the result of abuse, the Child Abuse Register shall be notified.
- DCS-01.5 The Children's Aid Society shall be responsible for appropriate steps to investigate, assess and protect any other children in the family (see "Investigation" (Chapter I, page 11), "Assessment" (Chapter I, page 19), Police Involvement (Chapter 4, page 33)).
- DCS-01.6 The Children's Aid Society shall ascertain if an inquest is to be held and document reasons given for the decision.
- DCS-01.7 The Children's Aid Society shall be represented at an inquest if one is being held.

Guidelines

- DCG-01.1 The Children's Aid Society will review the necessity and desirability of being represented by legal counsel at the inquest.
- DCG-01.2 In all cases of accidental death of a child in a known or suspected child abuse case an autopsy will be requested of the Coroner. Subsection 23(1) of The Coroner's Act, 1972, provides for post mortem examinations and analysis at the discretion of the Coroner and as the circumstances warrant.

12. CASE SUPERVISION

Commentary

Case supervision of child abuse investigations and case management should be undertaken by a qualified supervisor who has had experience and training in the management of child abuse cases. (see Regulations to The Child Welfare Act, 1978).

CS-01 **Case Supervision**

STANDARDS

- CSS-01.1 Except in emergency situations, workers who are investigating or managing child abuse cases shall review these cases with the supervisor routinely at intervals dictated by the needs of the worker and the facts of the case. Normally, supervision takes place:
- a) at the point of initial referral. This will ensure that all necessary steps are considered and taken during the investigation stage
 - b) at any point during the investigation stage when the worker has concern or difficulties
 - c) at the completion of the initial investigation. This will provide a review of the investigation and an opportunity to consider the disposition
 - d) in preparation for all case conferences
 - e) when consideration is being given to removing a child from the home
 - f) when consideration is being given to involving the police or the courts
 - g) when consideration is being given to returning the child to his home/parent
 - h) when a case is to be transferred

- i) when a client is "missing"
- j) when a child in care or subject to a supervision order is lost, missing or "AWOL"
- k) when consideration is being given to terminating a case
- l) when there are significant changes in the treatment plan
- m) when there are major crises in the family
- n) any situation which requires reporting to the Ministry of Community and Social Services
- o) before the assigned social worker leaves for any extended absence from the agency, or permanently leaves the agency
- p) at the option of the supervisor or worker.

CSS-01.2 Each Children's Aid Society shall establish and maintain a documented plan for child abuse case management which shall include but shall not be limited to:

- a) access for supervisors to **more senior staff** for consultation about difficult case decisions
- b) the designation of alternative workers in the absence of a senior staff member.

Guidelines

CSG-01.1 The Children's Aid Society will ensure 24-hour availability of qualified supervisory consultation to Society social workers.

CSG-01.2 In order that supervisors remain in touch with front-line service, and to maximize their assistance to front-line staff, supervisors' selective involvement in the management of a small number of child abuse cases might be given consideration.

13. CASE REVIEW

Commentary

Case review is the process of examining the events in a case, the movement or lack of movement and the appropriateness of previously determined goals. It is a method by which social workers, supervisors and other professionals involved in a child abuse case may evaluate, modify or affirm the plan of service to the child and family.

In those instances where abuse occurs while the child is in the care of the Society, the Society is responsible for initiating an internal review of the case and would follow the same procedures of assessment and verification of the information as in any other child abuse investigation. (See Reporting to the Ministry, Chapter 10, page 51).

CR-01 **Case Review**

STANDARDS

CRS-01.1 All child abuse investigations, open protection cases, and child care cases where abuse has occurred and remains a current concern, shall be reviewed according to the times indicated under "Supervision" and in keeping with the process indicated under the following sections:

- a) removal of child from parents
- b) return of child to parents
- c) termination of case
- d) police involvement
- e) court involvement.

CRS-01.2 Records of all case reviews shall be filed in accordance with procedures outlined under "Record Keeping." (Chapter 16, page 64).

Guideline

CRG-01.1 The Children's Aid Society will establish a system by which all cases designated as child abuse could be reviewed as outlined under Case Supervision.

14. TERMINATION OF CHILD ABUSE CASES

Commentary

Except when the Court has legally terminated parental rights, the decision to terminate a child abuse case rests on the family's ability to provide a safe environment for the child. Termination should be seen as a process of gradual withdrawal as the family's need for services from the Society diminishes. Ideally, this gradual withdrawal should be seen by the family as an expression of confidence in the family's ability to care for the child and function independently.

In no case should the decision to terminate, or the termination process, be postponed indefinitely so that families are allowed to "drift", and caseloads accumulate numbers of inactive cases. Families should be fully informed and the decision should be a shared one involving the family, the worker, and the supervisor. In many instances other professionals, both inside and outside the Society will also be involved.

As a part of the termination process, families should be made aware of other services available to them in the community and of the continuing availability of CAS services should they require them.

TE-01 **Termination of Child Abuse Cases**

STANDARDS

- TES-01.1 Termination of a child abuse case shall take place upon direction of the Court, Crown wardship, or when the child's environment is assessed to be safe.
- TES-01.2 Termination shall be discussed with the family, and where appropriate, the child.
- TES-01.3 Other agencies and professionals involved in the case shall be informed of the decision to terminate service and shall be made aware of the Children's Aid Society's availability for future contacts.

- TES-01.4 The Children's Aid Society shall advise the Central Register of Child Abuse of termination decisions where cases have been registered. (See Guidelines for Reporting to the Child Abuse Register, CSD, COMSOC, February, 1981)
- TES-01.5 If there are any outstanding court orders respecting the child or family, the matter shall be returned to Court for review and recommendation prior to termination of service.

Guideline

- TEG-01.1 In child abuse cases where abuse ceases to be the primary reason for involvement and the case no longer requires intensive supervision (the child is considered safe), the child abuse aspect of the case may be terminated, for reporting purposes, even though the case remains open to the agency for the provision of some other service.

15. TRANSFERS

Commentary

From time to time, it is necessary to transfer management of a child abuse case to another worker or agency. Such a transfer is difficult for most clients. This difficulty is heightened in abusing families which frequently have problems in trusting others and in reaching out for help. In many cases, a transfer can become a crisis for the family, therefore the worker should be sensitive to this possibility and should be readily available during this period.

TR-01 **Transfers Within the Agency**

STANDARD

TRS-01.1 At no time may an open child abuse case be without an assigned worker.

Guidelines

TRG-01.1 The transfer plan will be developed in consultation with the supervisor.

TRG-01.2 The transfer will be effected through a full case review involving both workers and the supervisor.

TRG-01.3 All related agencies actively involved with the family will be advised of the transfer, and will be given the name of the new worker responsible for the case.

TRG-01.4 Transfers will be effected as gradually and as sensitively as possible, in the following manner:

- i) The family will be advised and preparation will begin well in advance of the impending transfer.
- ii) The new worker will be introduced gradually to the family.
- iii) Where possible, both workers will have several contacts with the family before the transferring worker terminates with the family.

TR-02 **Transfers to Another Children's Aid Society
Within Ontario**

STANDARDS

- TRS-02.1 The transferring agency shall send a copy of relevant records regarding the family which shall include the following:
- a) copy of case recording including details regarding incidents of abuse, dynamics of the family, involvement with the agency, degree of cooperativeness, degree of risk, goals achieved (not achieved), treatment needs and plans for the family at point of transfer, areas of sensitivity, list of possible crises for the family, any other important or special considerations (see "Record Keeping", Chapter 16, page 65).
 - b) copy of photographs (where applicable)
 - c) copy of Court orders (where applicable)
 - d) copy of any other relevant reports.
- TRS-02.2 In urgent situations, relevant information shall be telephoned immediately to the agency receiving the transfer and will be followed by written referrals and records within fourteen days.

Guidelines

- TRG-02.1 The guidelines under "Transfers Within the Agency" (page 61) should be utilized.
- TRG-02.2 Participation in the case review will include representatives of all agencies having significant responsibility in the case and their counterparts in the other jurisdiction at a face-to-face meeting, (or a conference call might be considered).
- TRG-02.3 The previous worker will disengage when the new worker has assumed responsibility for the family.

TR-03 **Transfers Outside of Ontario**

STANDARDS

TRS-03.1 Complete details regarding the case (see TRS-02.1, page 62) shall be sent to the child protection agency in the province/state where the family is residing and shall be sent via normal interprovincial channels.

TRS-03.2 See TRS-02.2 (page 62)

TRS-03.3 In cases involving transfer to countries other than the United States, referral via normal international channels shall be utilized and complete details of the case forwarded to the agency providing service.

Guideline

TRG-03.1 The transfer plan will be developed in consultation with the supervisor.

16. RECORD KEEPING

Commentary

The following procedures are important steps in standardizing record keeping and facilitating access to records in child abuse cases for those providing service to children and families. For the Children's Aid Society, record-keeping is a critical tool as there are many instances where a worker's notes or a file are required for purposes of evidence. This necessitates that recording information be done as closely as possible to the time of the actual interview/observation. All regulations and requirements for record keeping, as outlined by The Child Welfare Act, 1978 or Ministry of Community and Social Services directives, must be observed.

RK-01 **Record Keeping of Child Abuse Cases**

STANDARDS

RKS-01.1 Every Children's Aid Society shall make suitable arrangements to ensure the safekeeping and accessibility of all child abuse records.

RKS-01.2 Every Children's Aid Society child abuse case file shall be divided into four separate sections with the following contents:

SECTION I

All case recordings, case notes, case review recording and social history.

SECTION II

All special reports directly related to the case including:

- psychological assessments or tests
- reports from various medical specialists (doctors, psychiatrists)
- school reports
- police occurrences
- alternate care reports

SECTION III

All Court documentation.

SECTION IV

All other correspondence and case material.

- RKS-01.3 All sections of the file shall appear in chronological order.
- RKS-01.4 Every Children's Aid Society shall establish and maintain an internal register of child abuse cases, active or closed, which were investigated and in which child abuse was verified or suspected.
- RKS-01.5 Access to the internal register shall be limited to Society staff .
- RKS-01.6 Every Children's Aid Society shall record any complaint respecting child abuse within twenty-four hours.
- RKS-01.7 A detailed recording of the initial investigation of alleged abuse shall be completed as soon as possible and preferably within twenty-one days of receipt of the allegation.
- RKS-01.8 Case recording shall be ongoing and shall be completed at least every three months.
- RKS-01.9 In addition to quarterly case recording, additional recording shall be placed in the file regarding all major case reviews, conferences and decision-making (see "Case Supervision" Chapter 12, page 55) in those cases of verified information of child abuse until the home is assessed safe for the child.
- RKS-01.10 All case recording respecting child abuse investigations shall be initialed and dated by the social worker and be read, initialed and dated by the supervisor.

RKS-01.11 All Society social workers handling child abuse cases shall be provided with and utilize a daily case notebook, which shall be the property of the Society and shall contain the worker's handwritten notes.

Guidelines for Keeping Case Notes in Child Abuse Cases

1. Brief notes should be made on all cases immediately after the occurrences of the events.
2. The data should include:
 - a) date, time, names and addresses of people involved
 - b) significant details pertinent to the investigation
 - c) date and time of the recording.
3. Notes should include all contacts, including telephone and written communications with clients, relatives, neighbours, agencies, etc.
4. Notes should also include unsuccessful attempts to contact the client and appointments missed or cancelled.
5. Notes should also include the significant material and documentation which contributes to the assessment.
6. Notes must be legible in case they are admitted to Court or in worker's absence another needs to read them.
7. Loose leaf is suggested so that case notes can be put on the file immediately and remain there accessible for Court use.
8. Notes should be retained for all cases at least two years following case closing, unless information in the notes has been recorded in the file.
9. Society procedures regarding confidentiality of records must be observed. Care should be taken to ensure that notebooks are not left where they can be seen by the public.

Guidelines

- RKG-01.1 Information from the internal register will be available on a 24-hour basis.
- RKG-01.2 Emergency after-hours staff will have access to an updated listing from this register.
- RKG-01.3 All case files listed in this register will be colour coded to facilitate identification and urgency.
- RKG-01.4 All case files listed in this register will be readily accessible on a 24-hour basis.