



Frequently Asked Questions Foster Home Specific

Q What is a Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation?

A When Children's Administration (CA) gets a report alleging that a child has been abused or neglected in foster care, the report is investigated by a DLR/CPS Investigator. These reports are investigated to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred and to assess the safety of children in the foster home.

Q What is DLR/CPS investigating when they investigate Child Abuse/Neglect?

A Child abuse or neglect means the injury, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation of a child by any person where circumstances indicate that the child's health, welfare, or safety is harmed. This includes negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child. (RCW 26.44.020)

Q What are examples of things investigated by DLR/CPS?

A Examples of things investigated by DLR/CPS include, but are not limited to: disciplinary practices that result in injuries, inappropriate restraints, lapses in supervision that place a child in danger, inappropriate administration of medications, sexual contact or physical altercations between children, and engaging in sexual touching of a child. (WAC 388-15-009)

Q How will I be contacted during a DLR/CPS investigation?

A You will be interviewed about the events and you should expect to have a home visit by the investigator handling your case. The children in your care will also be interviewed at an appropriate time and place. If additional information is needed, you can also expect the investigator to follow up with witnesses or other professionals that can provide relevant information. If it is alleged that a crime has occurred, you can expect that law enforcement will be notified. If law enforcement is involved, DLR/CPS will work collaboratively with the law enforcement agency. Your licensor will be informed of the allegations and the progress of your investigation. If you feel you need support you can call FIRST.

Q How will DLR/CPS contact me about an investigation?

A An investigator will notify you at the earliest point in the investigation that does not jeopardize child safety. They may contact you by phone or in person at your home. A DLR/CPS investigator may come to your home unannounced, DLR/CPS will work with law enforcement and follow their lead. You may as the investigator for estimated time frames for a face to face meeting.

Q What will I be told about the investigation?

A Initially you will be informed about the nature of the allegations such as Negligent Treatment/Maltreatment, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, or Sexual Exploitation. Often times the investigator will not provide additional details about the investigation until they are able to meet with you in person. The investigator will provide for you in person as much information as possible without jeopardizing the integrity of the investigation.

Q Can I tell the Investigator what happened from my point of view?

A The investigator will contact you either in person or by phone for an interview. In most cases the DLR/CPS investigator will interview the children in your care first. You may send in a written explanation of what happened (even if you think the referral will be determined to be unfounded). Your interview and any written documents you provide will be considered in the investigation and placed in the DLR/CPS file.

Q How long will the investigation take?

A The Division of Licensed Resources aims to complete your investigation within 45 days. However some investigations may take longer. Unless law enforcement or a prosecuting attorney is involved, state law requires DLR/CPS to complete the investigation within 90 days (RCW 26.44.030). If law enforcement is involved in the investigation, DLR/CPS defers to local law enforcement protocols.



Q Are there consequences for my biological children?

A A Children's Administration social services specialist or investigator must report an allegation of abuse or neglect of any child. If an investigator believes that your children's safety is at risk, we will provide services to help keep your children safe. The DLR/CPS investigator wants to hear from everyone with relevant information about what happened regarding an allegation of abuse or neglect, and may interview your child in an investigation. State law allows CA to interview alleged victims and foster children without their parents' permission. The investigator may ask for your permission to interview your child, if your child witnessed the incident. A neutral third party adult can be present during the child interview if you or your child requests one.

Q Are my foster children going to be removed?

A Sometimes foster children are removed during an investigation. However, often they are not. These decisions are made early in the case with limited information and with the goal of protecting the safety of foster children. The DLR/CPS investigator looks at an allegation and assesses the risk to foster children in the home. If the Division of Licensed Resources does not have enough information to ensure the safety of foster children in your home, they will recommend the foster children be removed. Children's Administration is the legal guardian of foster care and has the responsibility to move foster children when it is necessary to address their safety, well-being and permanence.

Q Will Children's Administration place more foster children with me during an investigation?

A Your licensor will address this with you on a case-by-case basis. If there are concerns about the safety of children in your home, your licensor may put a stop placement on your home. Placing you on a stop placement list with Children's Administration does not result in a negative action against your license. This informs the department that no more children may be placed with you until the risk is assessed and reduced. Also, you may choose not to have children placed with you during the investigation, if you feel like it would be too stressful for you or your family.

Q Will a foster child who is removed from my home be returned?

A The child's social services specialist will decide the best placement for the child. It is helpful for them to know whether you would like to be a placement option for the child who was removed. However, the child's worker and supervisor will consider the child's permanent plan and whether a secure and positive relationship has been formed between the child and the new caregivers. Moving the child back to your home may not be in the child's best interest.

Q What are the possible outcomes, or "findings," of a DLR/CPS investigation?

A Investigations are either "founded" or "unfounded." Findings are defined by state law (RCW 26.44.020 and WAC 388-15). The majority of DLR/CPS investigations result in unfounded findings.

Founded: More likely than not abuse or neglect occurred.

Unfounded: More likely than not abuse or neglect did not occur or there is not enough information to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred.

Law Enforcement has a different burden of proof than CPS. This means that one can have a founded finding for abuse even if law enforcement does not file criminal charges.

Q How will this affect my employment?

A In most circumstances, unfounded findings will not affect your employment. However, if you have a founded finding and you are employed by an agency that works with children or vulnerable adults, it may affect your employment.

Q How will I be notified of the outcome of the investigation?

A The investigating supervisor will send you a letter with the finding when the investigation is complete. If the finding is "founded," the appeal process is outlined in the letter. After the investigation is completed, you may request a copy of the investigative assessment and your DLR/CPS file.

Q Can I make a written statement explaining what happened?

A You may send the investigator a written statement at any time during the investigation. It will be placed in the DLR/CPS file. If the investigator gets your statement before the investigation is complete, it will be considered in the investigation findings.



Foster Intervention/Retention Support Team (FIRST)

is a resource that is available to foster parents to provide you with assistance during a DLR/CPS investigation. They also provide referrals to community resources. Contact FIRST at (253) 219-6782.

As a licensed Foster Parent, where can I get more information?

www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents



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