

Child Protective Systems Oversight Committee
Tuesday, November 15, 2016 | 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Child Abuse Prevention Center
4700 Roseville Rd, North Highlands, CA 95660

MEMBERS

Present	Present	Present
X Alexander, Roy	X Felion, Sister Jeanne	Saika, Tony
X Alvord, Karen	X Green, Rebecca	X Stone, Dimitrius
Bell, Michelle	X Johnston, Maynard (Chair)	X Uda, Betsy
Claar, Jane	X Maulfair, Virginia	Zone, Sharon
X Edison, Joni	Ore, Chris	
X Powells-Mays, June (Counsel)		
X Nosce, Abigail (Staff)		

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 4:04 pm. Quorum was established.

Review Meeting Minutes

The October 18, 2016 meeting minutes were reviewed. **Motion was made by Gini Maulfair, and seconded, to approve the October 18, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion carried.**

Discussion: Responding to instances of child abuse/neglect – Sacramento Police Department (PD)

Sergeant Patrick Kohles of Sacramento PD's Office of Investigations provided an overview of how the Department's Child Abuse/Sexual Assault Unit responds to and investigates child abuse and sexual assault.

- The Office of Investigations is responsible for developing information leading to the arrest of criminal offenders. It includes Detectives, Forensics, Public Safety IT, Records, Evidence and Property. The Child Abuse/Sexual Assault Unit not only investigates incidents of child abuse (for children under the age of 14) and sexual assault (all ages), but it also provides outreach and education to the community, reinforcing good safety precautions as well as the importance of having a plan and being aware.
- When calls regarding child abuse/sexual assault come in, a patrol officer is the first to respond. Their initial contact with the victim includes:
 - Obtaining statements – Statements are obtained from victim(s) and witness(es). This may include the reporting party, parents/caregivers, teachers, counselors, classmates, siblings and neighbors. Child victims are not asked to share details at this time; the goal is to conduct only one interview with the child to mitigate the trauma of having to repeat the story more than is necessary. Suspects' statements are generally not obtained at this time, unless they are on site (this allows investigators to review evidence prior to taking the suspect's statement).
 - Observing injuries – Immediate danger is assessed and injuries are documented. The #1 priority is the safety of the child.
 - Collecting evidence – There is a strong focus on the collection of evidence. Officers collect a variety of physical evidence in order to build a case. Evidence collected may include bedding, clothing, carpet samples, pictures, personal items such as diaries, letters, cards and jewelry, and computers (may do a forensic examination for digital evidence).

- Evidentiary exams – Victims are referred to the Bridging Evidence Assessment & Resources (BEAR) Center for child abuse assessment (including physical abuse and neglect), forensic medical examinations for sexual assault, and connection to community resources. DNA evidence may also be collected from the suspect. Forensics examiners are contacted to set up interviews with the victim(s) and the suspect.
 - Processes are in place for expedient collection and testing of sexual assault kits, as well as entry into the database. In Sacramento, kits are picked up and tested within 5-7 days.
- Cross reporting to CPS – Police officers are mandated reporters, and as such must report all suspicion or evidence of child abuse to CPS. The report to CPS is documented in the police report. Sacramento PD also takes additional steps to ensure the safety of the child and collaboration with CPS.
 - CPS is often called to find out if the child, parent, or caregiver has CPS history.
 - Officers take the child victim into protective custody, if necessary. Patrol officers are instructed to err on the side of caution – if there is any concern for the child’s safety they are to be placed in protective custody.
 - Reports are written and filed detailing the incident and documenting contact with CPS. Form 11166 Suspected Child Abuse Report is completed, filed and copies are submitted CPS, the District Attorney’s Office and the reporting party.
- Pre-text phone call – Recorded phone calls between the victim and the suspect, usually initiated by the victim, under the supervision of the officer, can be used to solicit incriminating statements from the suspect. The recording resulting from an effective pre-text call gives the investigator leverage during the subsequent interview of the suspect because the investigator can confront the suspect with the statements the suspect made during the call.
- The job of the Investigator/Detective is to build a prosecutable case that can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, and they work closely with the District Attorney’s Office on cases.
 - Victims are interviewed, taking into consideration their emotional condition.
 - Accusers and witnesses are interviewed – and sometimes are re-interviewed to prove or disprove allegations. False allegations are often made by parents involved in a child custody battle.
 - Evidence is collected, reviewed and used to build a case. Search warrants can be issued to obtain additional evidence.
 - Probable cause arrests are not typical, as it reduces the amount of time required to prove the case to 48 hours – which is difficult to accomplish.
 - The suspect’s name and information is run through various databases to check for previous criminal history.
 - Once the basis for a case is put together, the final interview is with the suspect. Polygraph exams may be used to analyze the physiological reaction of the suspect.
 - The case is then presented to the District Attorney, who will make final determination on whether to prepare and file criminal charges in court against the alleged criminal perpetrator.
 - Detectives may also testify in court – in preliminary hearings and throughout the court process – and may even testify on what expert witnesses have reported.
- Sacramento PD’s Office of Investigations works with many agencies in serving the children and families they come in contact with. They have collaborative relationships with CPS, hospitals, the District Attorney’s Office, community-based services provider organizations, and other law enforcement agencies.

- A CPS worker is outstationed in the Child Abuse/Sexual Assault Unit's office five days a week, acting as liaison between the two agencies. This helps by expediting processes, educating staff about policies and procedures, and ensures effective and efficient collaboration. Having the CPS liaison outstationed in the unit's office is important to managing the volume of reports received by the unit.
- Unit staff also participates in SCAN meetings – a multi-disciplinary approach where child abuse cases (sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect and issues with newborns) are discussed to ensure the children are receiving the appropriate resources. The meeting typically consists of child abuse doctors from various hospitals (Sutter, Kaiser, UCD), CPS and local law enforcement agencies.

Member Questions:

- Do all Patrol Officers have cameras?
 - Yes, typically – however they refer to crime scene investigators to take pictures of the evidence, as they have access to better equipment.
- How many cases are investigated on a monthly basis?
 - Between January 1 and November 1, 2016 the unit has received about 1200 reports of child abuse.
- Are all 1200 reports investigated?
 - Yes, in some way or another. Some cases are referred to CPS for investigation (the reports that aren't investigated criminally are investigated by CPS). Cases that aren't within the jurisdiction of Sacramento PD are referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation (however, often times Sacramento PD will provide a courtesy response, take the initial report, and forward the report to the appropriate agency for further investigation).
- Do you feel cross-reporting between your office and CPS is happening as it should?
 - Yes, we have a good working relationship with CPS. It also helps to have the CPS Social Worker outstationed in our office.
- What training do patrol officers receive regarding child abuse/sexual assault?
 - There is a block of classes dedicated to this topic through the Police Academy and is required of all officers to complete every two years.
 - This topic is covered through the Field Training Program, which includes a written manual to reference policy and procedures.
 - Ride-along training as also used, pairing new officers with experienced officers to respond to calls.
- Are more resources needed for your agency to provide services?
 - More resources are needed across the board.
- The Critical Incidents Subcommittee sees many cases with a history of domestic violence. What are your thoughts about resources?
 - WEAVE and My Sister's House are valuable community resources. They help victims become empowered to free themselves from abusive relationships.
- At what point does CPS call Law Enforcement (LE) for assistance?
 - CPS calls LE for a variety of things such as support services, when a Social Worker sees evidence of violence, assistance with removals, protective custody warrants served, and more. CPS and LE frequently collaborate out in the field.
- When there is a call to respond to an incident of domestic violence, is an arrest typically made?
 - Yes, the law mandates that an arrest is made for incidents of domestic violence. The primary aggressor is arrested.
- How do you respond when there are children in the home when you are making an arrest for a domestic violence incident?

- The officer assesses the situation for immediate danger. If the other parent is not present and the arrested parent wishes to release the child to someone else, the officer will run a background check on the person, and often times call CPS to see if there are any reports made against the person, before releasing the child to them. The incident is reported to CPS and CPS takes over with follow-up investigative work.

Subcommittee Updates

Critical Incidents (CI) Subcommittee

- At their last meeting, the subcommittee reviewed a case and CPS' evaluation of actions that led to the event. The subcommittee expressed a concern that it appeared the history of previous incidents in the household were overlooked when making decisions pertaining to the safety of the child in this instance.

Systems Subcommittee

- No updates.

CPS Quality Improvement Committee

- The committee reviewed the case described above by the CI Subcommittee.

2016 Work Plan

- The Systems Subcommittee was charged to write the section of the report which summarizes the project the Oversight Committee is working on, relevant information received from the presentations, and begin formulating preliminary recommendations.
- The Systems Subcommittee will also review the short report/recommendations around issues pertaining to Continuum of Care Reform that will be written by the Children's Coalition's Policy and Advocacy Committee. This report will be presented at the Oversight Committee's January meeting for consideration of inclusion into the 2016 Annual Report.
- The Critical Incidents Subcommittee was charged to write the section of the report summarizing the findings of the cases they reviewed, as well as any recommendations resulting from the review (there will be less cases reported than in previous years, due to the shorter timeframe for this report). They will also craft any preliminary recommendations they have around the 2016 Annual Report's theme of Sacramento community collaboration on child protection – how it is done now and how it can be improved.
- The 2016 Annual Report will also include updates/acknowledgement for how the County/Board of Supervisors has responded to the recommendations in previous years.
- The Committee reviewed and discussed the timeline for drafting sections and completing the report. The goal is to present the report to the Board of Supervisors in May 2017.
- CPS Oversight Committee member Tony Saika will educate the group about the work of the Sacramento Sheriff's Department's Child Abuse Bureau at the December meeting. A representative from DHA CalWORKs was invited to the January meeting to discuss how they collaborate on child protection. CPS Deputy Director Michelle Callejas is also scheduled to provide a CPS update at the January meeting.
 - Members were asked to begin thinking about questions they would like to ask upcoming presenters.

Announcements

None.

Public Comment

None.

Meeting adjourned at 6:11pm