Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU)

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What does IAIU do?

- As part of the New Jersey's legal mandate to investigate all allegations of abuse and neglect, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) oversees Child Protection and Permanency (CPP) and the Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU).

- The IAIU is a specialized child protective service unit that investigates reports of abuse and/or neglect that occur in public and private facilities that provide care to children up to 18 years of age. In addition, if an adult alleges they were the victim of abuse/neglect as a child in these settings, IAIU may also investigate.

IAIU Structure

Central Office-Administrative (Trenton)

NRO (Northern Regional Office)-Covers Bergen, Hunterdon, Passaic, Morris, Sussex and Warren Counties

MRO (Metropolitan Regional Office)-Covers Hudson and Essex Counties

CRO (Central Regional Office)-Covers Middlesex, Somerset, Union and Monmouth Counties

WRO (Western Regional Office) –Covers Mercer, Burlington, (parts) of Camden and Gloucester Counties

SRO (Southern Regional Office)-Covers Atlantic, Cape May, Ocean, Cumberland, (parts) of Camden and Salem Counties

Allegation Types

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Hitting, slapping, kicking, shaking, burning

SEXUAL ABUSE

Inappropriate touching, sexual exploitation

NEGLECT

Failure to provide adequate medical care, supervision, education

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, humiliation



Types of Facilities/Programs

- Foster Care/Resource Homes
- Residential Facilities
- Youth Shelters
- Detention Centers/Correctional Facilities
- Group homes
- Bus Companies
- Schools (public and private)
- Child Care Centers



Examples of Caregivers

- Foster Parents/Resource Providers
- Youth Workers
- Teachers
- Classroom Aides
- Bus Drivers
- Corrections Officers and Security Guards
- Facility Staff

Interviews

The Investigator begins his/her fact-finding process by conducting interviews with various individuals.

Administrator, parent, child victim, child witnesses, medical staff, Social Worker, staff witnesses, Internal Affairs Unit, alleged perpetrator,
(order can vary from case to case).

Investigators should be provided with a safe and private meeting area which is conducive to conducting interviews.

Who can be interviewed?

- All individuals identified in the referral
- Individuals mentioned in an interview
- Anyone present during the alleged incident
- Anyone who may have information regarding the incident/allegation

Final Report

- After the investigation is complete, a final report is issued. Each appropriate entity is notified of the findings of the investigation to enhance its ability to promote safety for the children in care and minimize the likelihood of future child maltreatment in the setting.

- Findings: Substantiated, Established, Not Established, Unfounded.



What's New

In 2027, IAIU will be responsible for investigating Child Abuse & Neglect and complaints of Financial Exploitation & Personal Exploitation for youth 18-21 years of age receiving services or residing in a DCF Regulated Facilities.

NEW Legislative Bill S3751

Specifically, the bill amends the definition of "child" to mean any (1) person less than 18 years of age alleged to have been abused or neglected, or (2) any person less than 21 years of age alleged to have been abused or neglected, or subject to exploitation by a teacher, employee, contractor, or volunteer, whether compensated or uncompensated, of an institution responsible for the care or supervision of that person, as regulated by the Department of Children and Families (department), including employees of day schools.

Why is this change happening

Previously, when a child turned 18 in a DCF Regulated Program and had an Intellectual/Developmental Disability, the responsibility for investigating safety concerns shifted from DCF to the Department of Human Services (DHS). This often-caused confusion and a "gap" in specialized protection. This new law ensures that the same specialized unit (IAIU) that protects children under 18 continues to protect them until age 21, providing a seamless safety net.

The alleged victims 18–21-year-olds do not have to have an I/DD diagnosis to be a victim if they reside or receive services from a DCF Regulated facility.

IAIU Specialized Young Adult Unit

This unit will be comprised of 4 Investigators and an Assistant Regional Supervisor and will be managed by a Supervisor of Investigations in IAIU's Central Office.

IAIU-will investigate allegations of Child Abuse and Neglect of 18-21 y/o youth in DCF Regulated Facilities.

Investigations in Day schools will be handled by the DCF Conflict Investigation Unit.

IAIU Specialized Young Adult Unit

Financial and Personal Exploitation

IAIU will also investigate allegations of Financial Exploitation over $100 and Personal Exploitation.

These type of allegations will be labeled as “complaints”. These complaints will either be confirmed or unconfirmed. Financial/Personal investigations will only apply to the 18–21-year-old population.

Reporting

Facilities will be required to report any suspected Child Abuse/Neglect and/or Financial & Personal Exploitation concerning this 18-21 y/o to the State Central Registry.

State Central Registry (SCR) -is the centralized hotline unit operated by DCF to receive and process reports of child abuse and neglect.

Hotline Number

1-877-NJ-ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)

Questions and Next Steps

