

30-Day CIRT REVIEW REPORT
Review Completed 8-30-05
Report Completed 10-7-05

I. Introduction

Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) adopted the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) protocol on November 1, 2004. This protocol was developed for the following purposes:

- To specify the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare procedures that will be used when a critical incident occurs;
- To increase the Department's accountability to the public;
- To ensure timely responses by the Department with respect to any critical incident in Child Welfare; and
- To increase the Department's ability to recommend necessary changes to statutes, administrative rules, policies and procedures, practices, training and personnel matters.

The following is a 30-day report as required by the protocol, which includes initial findings, preliminary recommendations and next steps. During the next 30-day period, DHS will continue a comprehensive review of these preliminary findings and assess the degree to which these findings have statewide implications. The CIRT team will then assign specific tasks, identify time frames and desired outcomes.

II. CIRT Reason:

On 7-25-05, one-month-old Devon Gould was transported to Rogue Valley Medical Center with life threatening inflicted injuries. The child was then transported to Emmanuel Hospital. The mother was arrested. At the time of his injury Devon was in the temporary custody of the Department of Human Services but in the physical custody of his mother. Devon's older sibling previously had been removed from the mother's custody because of mistreatment by his father.

III. CIRT Response and Case Status Update:

a. Criminal Investigation and CPS Assessment:

Medford Police Department is handling the criminal investigation. The mother was arrested and charged with two counts of Assault II and Criminal Mistreatment. The mother was indicted by a Grand Jury on 7/28/05 for the same offenses. The Jackson child welfare office is coordinating with law enforcement on the child protective services assessment.

b. Media Response:

Pursuant to the protocol, the CIRT lead designated Medford Police Department as the media lead. Patricia Feeny is the DHS media contact.

IV. CIRT Review Process:

a. Case Review Process:

The case file review was conducted at the Jackson child welfare office by technical staff from Central Office on 8-10 and 8-11-05. The CIRT team developed a list of questions and areas of focus for this review related to child protective services referrals, service planning, casework contacts and supervision. Actions of DHS staff were reviewed for compliance with administrative rule and policy as well as approved practice. The recommendations of the review were completed on 8-30-05. The review process was used to assist in the development of questions for subsequent staff interviews.

b. Staff Interview Process:

Staff interviews by DHS administration and human resources staff were completed with the child protective services caseworkers, the permanency caseworker, the court worker, the Team Decision Meeting facilitator, two social service assistants and three supervisors. Practice recommendations from the staff interviews are included in these recommendations.

V. Initial Findings and Recommendations:

- 1. Finding:** The Jackson Branch assessed parental capacity with resources and tools available to them. However, additional tools are needed on a statewide basis to assess parental protective capacity and parenting capacity.

Recommendation: The Family Based Services (FBS) Program staff will provide statewide consultation in the identification of resources

and research based tools to assess attachment, parenting ability and protective capacity.

Recommendation: Jackson Child Welfare manager and Child Protective Services (CPS) supervisor will meet with the local juvenile court judges to discuss the balance of child safety, parental protective capacity, and attachment issues for young children when making out of home placement decisions.

- 2. Finding:** The mother participated in services, but there was inadequate documentation that the mother had followed through with services or that service providers reported behavioral change that would support safe parenting.

Recommendation: FBS and Child Protective Services (CPS) program staff will provide training locally and statewide on the revised policy expectation that current service participation and provider recommendations be obtained prior to making reunification, or unstructured visitation supervision plans for families.

Recommendation: The Child Welfare Manager and the FBS consultant will work with the local family based services providers to make sure they are providing timely reports on clients, specifically participation rates and progress in making change.

- 3. Finding:** Devon's older sibling was in the custody of DHS and had only unsupervised visits with his mother at the relative's home. Lack of supervision of these visits with the older child limited the ability of DHS to adequately assess the mother's capacity to manage the behavior of her toddler and adequately protect and parent her infant.

Recommendation: The Jackson child welfare managers will review the process for determining the level of supervision, monitoring, and documentation necessary for family visits.

Recommendation: FBS and Foster Care program staff will review policy, practice and staffing related to the supervision of family visits. Statewide protocols will be developed to assist local offices in determining the level of supervision necessary and type of documentation required.

- 4. Finding:** Safety planning and the use of Team Decision Meetings at critical junctures and in domestic violence situations did not include all critical information available.

Recommendation: FBS and CPS program staff will provide a local practice forum (a facilitated discussion to enhance practice and professional development) focusing on safety planning and the use of TDM's at critical junctures and in domestic violence situations. Local CET's (consultant, education and training staff) will assist with curriculum and scheduling. Forums on this topic will be provided in local areas statewide.

- 5. Finding:** Social service assistants' documented supervised visits as caseworker 30-day face-to-face contact.

Recommendation: Jackson Child Welfare manager and supervisors will review the 30-day face-to-face contact policy with staff to clarify that documented supervised visits do not constitute required 30-day face-to-face contact.