

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY TEAM MEMBERS

Law Enforcement Officer

- Responds to calls, stabilizes the crime scene, takes initial statements, as appropriate
- Conducts criminal history records checks on alleged offenders
- Collects evidence, ensures protection of evidence and proper chain of custody
- Interviews child victims, witnesses, and alleged perpetrator as indicated by the county Memorandum of Understanding
- Facilitates the use of technological investigative tools such as monitored telephone conversations
- Apprehends alleged perpetrators, when appropriate, and conducts investigative interviews and interrogations
- Takes the alleged child victim into protective custody, when necessary to protect the child
- Testifies in court
- Protects workers during investigative interviews, if necessary
- Seizes, protects, and keeps evidence

County Prosecutor or Agency Attorney

- Actively participates in developing the overall investigative strategy for the case
- Assesses evidence to determine its potential utility in court
- Assists in drafting search warrants
- Requests restraining orders for the alleged perpetrator
- Reviews evidence and files petitions of juvenile court for the removal of children

- Participates in interviews with alleged perpetrators and alleged victims, when appropriate
- Provides guidance on legal issues
 - Determines appropriate charges and the best means of charging (i.e. arrest vs. grand jury)
- Prepares witnesses for court, or oversees a program for preparing children for court
- Presents the state's case at trial

While child protective services, the prosecutor, and law enforcement are the principle members of most investigative teams, there are three other entities that are often involved in the investigation of child maltreatment

Children's Hospital or other Qualified Medical Staff

These medical staff examine and treat children who have been maltreated. Each region in Ohio has a trained professional in the collection of medical evidence. They have highly developed skill and expertise, and utilize state of the art examination techniques and equipment specifically for the examination of child maltreatment. Most regions are served by a Children's Hospital, while others are served by clinics or Child Advocacy Centers (<http://www.oncac.org>). Workers should get to know the trained professionals in their area and become familiar with their protocol. Workers should utilize these professionals in cases where evidence collection is needed. In addition, medical staff do the following:

- Report suspected cases of maltreatment as mandated reporters
- Interpret medical findings for the investigative team
- Record statements made by alleged child victims during the examination
- Preserve physical evidence secured during the examination (i.e., semen) or any photographs taken of injuries

Mental Health Professionals

- Assist in the interpretation of psychological information received by the team
- Make treatment recommendations for children
- Conduct psychological and/or psychiatric assessments of children

Schools

School personnel are one of the most frequent sources of reports to PCSAs regarding child maltreatment. While they do not play an active role in the investigation process, they often cooperate with the investigation by providing access to the alleged child victim and a location for the interview. They have specific protocol and procedures about this which the caseworker should follow. As mandated reporters, they have a right to know whether the case was investigated and the disposition of the case (whether it was opened for ongoing services or closed upon completion of the investigation).