

CENTER for VICTIM RESEARCH

Building an evidence base for victim services

Child Abuse: Improving Investigation & Prosecution Survey

Author(s) of Instrument:

Sherri Johnson

Key References: Publications related to this instrument

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. (2013, October). *Child Abuse: Improving Investigation & Prosecution Survey Report*.

Primary Use/Purpose: This section describes what this instrument was designed to measure.

This survey was developed to gather information on investigative, administrative, and judicial processes related to child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse/exploitation, in Virginia. The study focused on three areas related to child abuse: laws, policies/procedures, and training. Specifically, we are interested in the processes that directly impacts child victims and how these processes may minimize or worsen their trauma.

Background and Development: How and why this instrument was developed.

Surveys were sent to those involved with organizations that serve child victims in the Commonwealth of Virginia such as advocates, child protective service employees, judges, law enforcement officers, and medical professionals. The aim of this study was to identify needs and improve the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse.

Psychometrics (if applicable): Any testing of this instrument.

N/A

Link to Instrument: Link to the instrument if available.

See attached.

Submitted by: Jim McDonough submitted this instrument to the CVR Instruments Collection and certified permission to publicly share this instrument.

Child Abuse: Improving Investigation & Prosecution Survey

This anonymous survey has been sent to you because of your involvement with the system that serves child victims in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The goal of the survey is to gather information on **investigative**, **administrative**, and **judicial** processes related to child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse/exploitation.

We understand that staffing, funding, and resource allocation may be areas that need improvement but we ask that, for this survey, you focus on the areas of 1) laws, 2) policies/procedures, and 3) training. Specifically, we are interested in the processes that directly impact child victims and how these processes may minimize or worsen their trauma.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

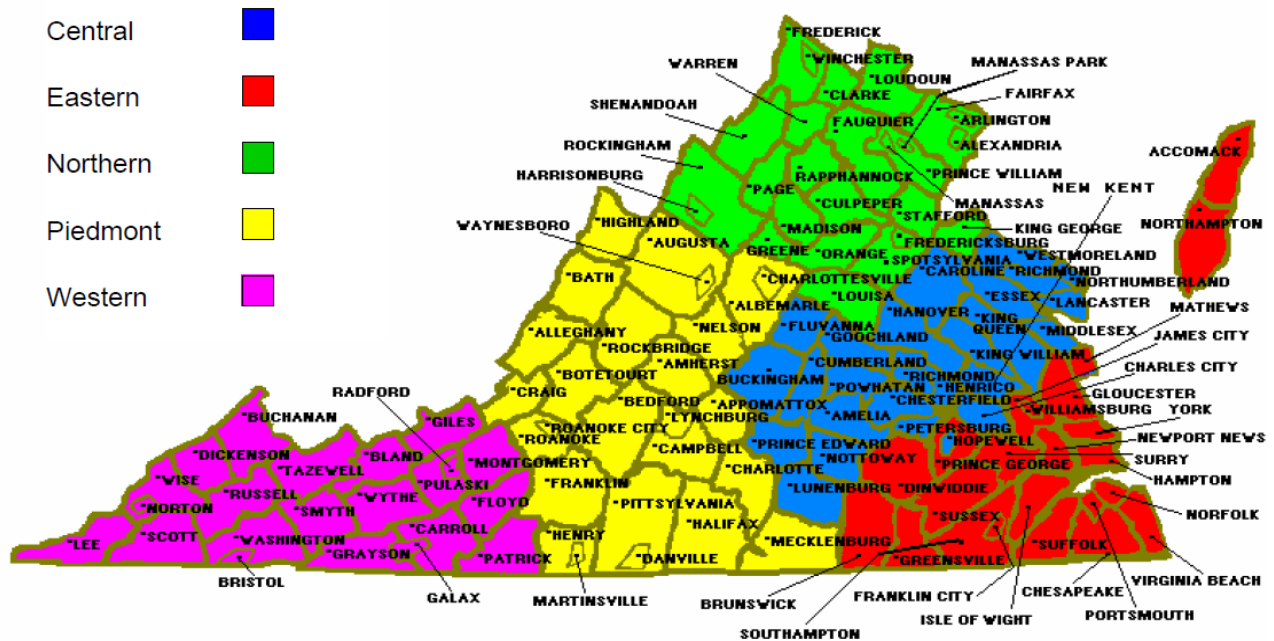
Please begin by telling us a little more about yourself:

***1. What is your professional field?** *(select one)*

- Advocacy
- Child Welfare
- Education
- Judge
- Law Enforcement
- Legal
- Medical
- Mental Health / Counseling
- Other (describe) _____

***2. Which of the following best describes the agency/organization for which you work?** *(select one)*

- Advocacy Organization
- Child Advocacy Center (CAC)
- Child Protective Services (CPS)
- Circuit Courts
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Dept. of Social Services (DSS) Attorneys' Office
- Juvenile & Domestic Relations (J&DR) Courts
- Law Enforcement
- Local Department of Social Services
- Medical Environment
- Private Attorney representing children or parents/families
- Prosecutor's Office
- School System
- Other (describe) _____



***3. Please look at the above map and then indicate below the region where you are involved in the handling of cases of child abuse and/or neglect cases. (Select one region. If you work in more than one of these regions, please choose the location where you do the majority of your work, or if you work statewide, select statewide.)**

- Central
- Eastern
- Northern
- Piedmont
- Western
- Statewide

RESOURCES

***4. Do you have a child abuse Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) in your locality?**

For the purpose of this survey, a MDT is a group of professionals from various agencies (at minimum: CPS, law enforcement and prosecutor) who work in a coordinated and collaborative manner to ensure an effective investigation and response to cases of child abuse and neglect. NOTE: A MDT is not a Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT).

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Not applicable

(if 4 = yes)

4a. How often does the MDT meet?

- weekly
- monthly
- quarterly
- as needed
- doesn't meet
- don't know
- not applicable

(if 4 = yes)

4b. Does the MDT have a written protocol?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

(if 4 = yes)

If you have a written protocol and you believe that it serves your community well, we would like to have a copy in an effort to begin to look at best practices. We will provide you with a reminder and information on where to send a copy of your protocol at the end of this survey.

(if 4 = yes)

4c. Which disciplines are represented on your MDT? *(select all that apply)*

- Child Advocacy Center Staff
- Child Protective Service
- Education
- Law Enforcement
- Medical
- Medical Examiner
- Mental Health
- Probation and Parole
- Prosecution
- Victim Advocacy
- Victim Services
- Don't know
- Other (describe) _____

(if 4 = no)

4d. You indicated that you do not have a formal child abuse MDT in your locality. Please indicate

the primary reason why. *(select one)*

- We have never thought about forming one
- We would like to form one, but have not gotten around to it
- There is resistance from one of the key partners

We had one, but it dissolved over time
We are in the process of forming one
Don't know
Other (describe) _____

(if 4d ≠ "we have never thought about forming one")

4d-1. Your primary reason for not having a formal child abuse MDT in your locality was _____. Please provide further explanation.

5. Does your locality have access to a Child Advocacy Center? *(select one)*

Yes, it is in my jurisdiction
Yes, it is in a neighboring jurisdiction
No and I would like to see one established
No and we function OK without one
Don't know

(If 5 = yes)

5a. In what percentage of cases in which you have been involved is a victim of child maltreatment interviewed more than once?

0% (Never)
1% – 25%
26% – 50%
51% – 75%
76% – 100%
Don't Know
Not applicable

(If 5 = yes and if 4 = yes)

5b. What criteria are used by your MDT to determine when a child WILL be interviewed jointly? *(select all that apply)*

Severity of the case
Victim characteristics, including age
Suspect characteristics, including age
Availability of appropriate interview location
Agency/staffing resources available
Location in service area
Urgency of the case
Desire to minimize trauma to child
Don't know
Other (describe) _____

(If 5 = yes)

5c. Indicate the factor(s) that have led to a decision where a child WAS NOT interviewed jointly. (select all that apply)

- Team members are not available to participate
- There is not time to gather the team because the interview must be conducted immediately to protect the child
- Lack of written protocol to guide the decision
- Poor or unclear written protocol
- Not applicable: Child always interviewed jointly
- Age of child
- Location of child
- Availability of victim
- Don't know
- Other (describe) _____

(If 5c = age of child)

5c-1. You indicated that "age of child" was a factor that led to a decision where a child WAS NOT interviewed jointly. Please provide details.

(If 5c = location of child)

5c-1. You indicated that "location of child" was a factor that led to a decision where a child WAS NOT interviewed jointly. Please provide details.

(If 5c = availability of victim)

5c-1. You indicated that "availability of victim" was a factor that led to a decision where a child WAS NOT interviewed jointly. Please provide details.

INVESTIGATIVE / ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

Keeping in mind the **INVESTIGATIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS (CPS and Criminal)** in cases of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse as it directly impacts child victims...

6. For each listed reporting and investigative process component, please select one of the following:

- Needs to be improved
- No change needed
- Don't know (select this if you have no knowledge in this area)

Reporting and Investigative Process Component	Needs to be improved	No change needed	Don't know
<i>select one for each component</i>			
A. Reporting of a child abuse/neglect situation to CPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. CPS response time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. CPS initial interview with child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. CPS initial safety assessment & safety planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. CPS follow-up investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Reporting of a child abuse/neglect situation to law enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Law Enforcement initial investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Law Enforcement contact with CPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Law Enforcement follow-up investigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Forensic interview of child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Medical examination of the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Adherence to joint protocols	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Investigation of child maltreatment-related fatalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Investigations involving individuals with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Other component	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(if 6 A – O = “needs to be improved”)

6a. You indicated that improvement is needed in the reporting and investigative process component(s) listed in the following table.

For each of the components in the table below, please indicate if improvement is needed in the areas of Laws, Policies & Procedures, and/or Training. Also provide some explanation about why you feel the component needs improvement in the selected areas and indicate the 2 components you think are the MOST in need of improvement. (Note “1” for most needed and “2” for second most needed.) If “other component” was one of your selections, please describe what this component is.

(Matrix will appear listing each of the components in Q6 for which the respondent selected “improvement is needed.”)

(Example if respondent selected A, B, C above)

Reporting and Investigative Process Component that Needs Improvement	Laws	Policies & Procedures	Training	Explain
	<i>select all that apply</i>			
A. Reporting of a child abuse/neglect situation to CPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B. CPS response time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

C. CPS initial interview with child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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JUDICIAL PROCESS

Keeping in mind the **JUDICIAL PROCESS** in cases of child abuse, neglect and sexual abuse as it directly impacts child victims...

7. For each listed process component, please select one of the following:

- Needs to be improved
- No change needed
- Don't know *(if you have no knowledge in this area)*

Judicial Process Component that Needs Improvement	Needs to be improved	No change needed	Don't know
	<i>select one for each component</i>		
A. Prosecutor's involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Guardian ad litem's involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. CASA's involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Local DSS attorney's involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Court processes that minimize trauma to child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Court's role in monitoring child's safety while under court's jurisdiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Timeliness of civil court processes and hearings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Due process and fairness to the alleged abuser in court proceedings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Other component	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(if 7 A – I = "needs to be improved")

7a. You indicated that improvement is needed in the judicial process component(s) listed in the following table.

For each of the components in the table below, please indicate if improvement is needed in the areas of Laws, Policies & Procedures, and/or Training. Also provide some explanation about why you feel the component needs improvement in the selected area(s) and indicate the 2 components you think are the MOST in need of improvement. (Note "1" for most needed and

“2” for second most needed.) If “other component” was one of your selections, please describe what this component is.

(Matrix will appear listing each of the components in Q7 for which the respondent selected “improvement is needed.”)

(Example if respondent selected A, B, C above)

Judicial Process Components	Laws	Policies & Procedures	Training	Explain
	<i>select all that apply</i>			
A. Prosecutor’s involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B. Guardian ad litem’s involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
C. CASA’s involvement and interaction with the child during court involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

8. Please share any additional thoughts about changes to LAWS that could help improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse cases in Virginia, in a manner that would reduce trauma to the child.

9. Please share any additional thoughts about changes to POLICIES and PROCEDURES that could help improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse cases in Virginia, in a manner that would reduce trauma to the child.

10. Please share any additional thoughts about changes to TRAININGS that could help improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse cases in Virginia, in a manner that would reduce trauma to the child. Please indicate professions and specifics of training if possible.

(@ end of survey if 4 AND 4b = yes)

*****REMINDER*****

You replied that your locality has a formal child abuse Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and that it uses a written protocol.

*If you believe that your MDT's written protocol **serves your community well**, we would like to have a copy in an effort to begin to look at best practices. In order to maintain anonymity with this survey, please send a copy of your protocol to: [xxx](#)*

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey on the investigative, administrative, and judicial processes related to child abuse and neglect. We hope that through the improvement of processes and use of best practices, we can lessen the trauma for Virginia's child victims.