

MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT
Institutional Abuse Investigations - Office of Children's Services

#42 (SENT)

Impact

Quality Enhancement **Significantly decrease investigation time on Institutional Abuse cases by relocating function to an investigation unit in the Office of Children's Services.**

THE ISSUES

- Inadequate coordination/communication among Institutional Abuse Investigators and other staff.
- Delays in completion of Institutional Abuse investigations.
- Authority of Institutional Abuse investigator to monitor and enforce facilities' compliance with findings unclear.

THE GOAL

- Improve Departmental procedures for handling Institutional Abuse and ensure sharing of crucial information with other appropriate staff.
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of Institutional Abuse investigations.
- Enhance uniformity in screening and accepting Institutional Abuse reports.

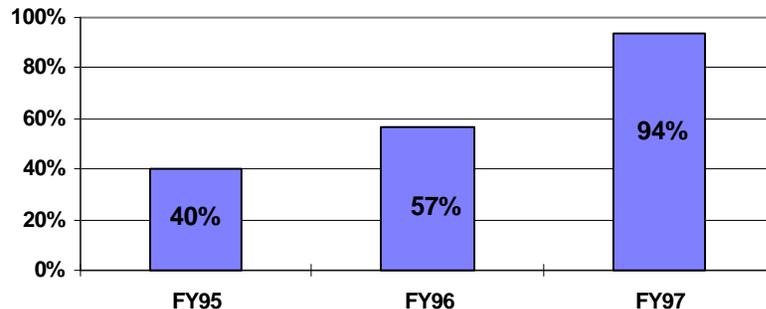
THE INTERVENTION

- Screen Institutional Abuse cases through DFS Intake. Develop system for notification of other staff, on a need-to-know basis, of details of IA cases and outcomes.
- Move Institutional Abuse to Investigative unit in the Office of Children's Services
- Move responsibility for investigation of foster home abuse and neglect reports to the Institutional Abuse staff.

THE RESULTS

- 69 reports have been accepted by the Institutional Abuse unit in less than 6 months (May-October). This compares to 80 accepted reports over a recent full year.
- FY97 - 92% of Institutional Abuse investigations were completed within 45 days compared to 57% in FY96.
- Improved uniformity in applying criteria for accepting Institutional Abuse cases and improve tracking of IA investigations.

Percent of Institutional Abuse Cases Completed within 45 days



Narrative Summary

Inadequate coordination and communication between Institutional Abuse investigators and other staff working on Child Abuse and Neglect investigations which might include some of the same victims or perpetrators became a serious concern of DFS following reviews of cases resulting in death and serious injury to children. This lack of coordination and communication resulted in non-identification of a perpetrator in a child abuse investigation as the same person who had a history of complaints filed against her as child care worker.

A review of Department policy and practice revealed that:

- policy and procedure were outdated and in need of revision
- lack of clarity in all operating Divisions about what staff to notify of an Institutional Abuse complaint
- lack of clarity concerning authority/responsibility for monitoring facilities and corrective action
- placement of Institutional Abuse Unit in the Office of Child Care Licensing, deprived function of oversight and expertise focused on abuse and neglect.

Recommendations included:

- Screening all Institutional Abuse cases through DFS Intake, and training Intake staff
- Relocating Institutional Abuse staff from the Office of Child Care Licensing to the Office of Children's Services
- Extensive revision of policies and procedures
- Inclusion of foster home investigations as part of Institutional Abuse function