

Practice Alert



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by:

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Interviewing Household Members

The purpose of this Practice Alert is to inform staff that the Child Welfare Manual (5.2.6) has been updated to align with the Structured Decision Making (SDM) definition of “household”. Staff must remember that a child’s household does not just imply physical residence. The definition of “household” is as follows:

All persons who have significant in-home contact with the child, including those who have a familial or intimate relationship with any person in the home. This may include persons who have an intimate relationship with a parent in the household (boyfriend or girlfriend) but may not physically live in the home or a relative where the legal parent allows the relative authority in parenting and child caregiving decisions.

To truly assess safety and in order to conduct a thorough Investigation, Family Assessment, or Newborn Crisis Assessment, staff must interview all adults who are considered part of the child(ren)’s household. Staff must assess whether any member of the victim child's household poses any safety threats to the child(ren), and to ascertain their knowledge of the reported concerns.

If staff identify members of a child’s household that are not part of their physical residence, they should interview those individuals as a collateral contact, safety network member, and/or witness to the alleged incident.

Cari Pointer
CA/N Program Specialist