Department of Social Services and School Counselors

Amy Watson Greene (Child Protective Services) & Gail Corelli (Lead Attorney)

Topic:

* Information Sharing: what we can share and why it can or cannot be shared
* Anyone can send a request
	+ You must get a letter back telling you if the letter was accepted or not
	+ Who should we contact if we do not get a letter?
		- Linda Justice or Amy Greene
	+ What is the expected response time from when a report is made?
		- When a report is made a response time is part of the intake process- a response time tree
			* Can be an immediate; 24 hour; or 72 hour response
			* Time to have face-to-face contact with family
			* Response time to school
				+ If school is a reporter- within 5 days you should get a letter
				+ Within 5 days of a case decision you should get a letter
				+ If the report comes from someone else (social worker)- obliged to send information to everyone named on the report
				+ MDT representatives- can receive more information Lesley Reynolds and Brendan Gartner
		- What do I do if a child says I’ve been beat, abused, I am afraid/scared to go home?
			* If parent or caretaker has been accused in good faith, then report it
			* They decide to carry on or not through the structured intake form
			* The more details
			* A child under 12 refusing to get on the bus or go home is an immediate response time
			* We are mandatory reporters
		- Will the parent know who made the report (that the child reported his parent)?
			* It is a crime to reveal reporter information
			* The identity of the reporter is the most protected information (only released by the order of a judge)
			* May share that the child expressed concerns, but they do not share who made the report
		- In October 2007, the application of Child Protective Services the application changed
			* If it is physical or sexual abuse, there is immediate notification to district attorney then they go to the school
				+ Child Advocacy Center is a place they may do the interview
				+ Information/details from child may not be shared with parent at this time as it may jeopardize the investigation
			* If it is a family assessment- there is not enough food in the home, not appropriate clothes, not just poverty, but if they ask enough questions they can usually find a way to help (family may not know how to apply for economic services)
			* What about domestic violence?
				+ If it is domestic violence with a weapon- it is forensic investigation

Immediate response

* + - * + If it is not a weapon- it is a family assessment

Within 72 hour response

* + - They are obliged to share the allegation with the family, but not who made it (CAPTA- federal law)-
			* The reporter’s information and any information that could reasonably tell who the reporter is to be removed if requested under a court order
			* Only the attorney can determine what records can leave the agency under a court order
		- When a report is made and the social worker comes to the school to interview what can the counselor expect to hear back?
			* If they respond to the school you are entitled to a reporter letter within 5 days.
			* Social worker should not be sharing information back with the reporter or school counselor for an ongoing case.
		- How do we improve communication?
			* If there is an open report the information is channeled to the social worker.
			* If not getting a response- hit 0 and # and you will get
			* 219-1803 (Direct to Amy)
		- Why is communication one-direction, from the counselor to the social worker and not in reverse
			* Confidentiality regulations are clear that CPS is only to receive information not to share information
			* It can be as frustrating to the CPS staff member, but by sharing they would be breaking the law

Safety plans assessment- What is the expectation from DSS from the school?

* Need clearer communication when the plan exists and when it goes away.
* Depends if it is an open assessment without court. Letters will be sent to the school if they are the reporter.
* The schools can be sent a letter of placement by DSS; The schools want a letter when the custody is terminated.
* In most cases, if DSS has taken custody the parents have limited visitation and they should not be visited at the school and never be allowed to take the children from the school. IEP meeting something totally different.
* Case workers should be supplying the letters.

How often is there communication between the school social worker and DSS?

* Once a month meetings with social workers and review of procedures. There are no expectations for the number of times that they are required to contact the schools.
* School based relationship with the social workers.

Who should we be calling when we can’t get someone to take a report? Four people are constantly on the phone lines. Call the intake numbers directly and leave a message will call back in 30 minutes.

* 910-455-3113 (non-emergency number for the sheriff) this person will contact DSS. Use afterhours after 5pm and before 8am.

Guardians appointed by the court seem to be the only person who can have everything.