

Abuse Complaints Against Foster Providers Child Developmental Disability Foster Homes

Any foster provider may be accused of abuse. Allegations of abuse against a foster provider are upsetting for the foster provider, your family as well as children placed in your home. This can be a time wrought with stress and anxiety. Knowing the steps in the assessment process may alleviate some of the anxiety associated with this experience. The primary objective of the protective services assessment is to evaluate the level of risk or future maltreatment to children, determine the factors contributing to any significant level of risk, and to work with families to find resources which will reduce the risk.

Abuse complaints lodged against foster providers are assessed by Adults, Children and Families (CAF) protective service workers. This process involves assessing the risk to the children in your home and whether the allegations are founded, unfounded or unable to determine. CAF may also ask office of Client Rights from Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) or County DD program staff to assist. In some cases a law enforcement officer may investigate to determine if a crime has been committed. The following are steps in the process.

1. When an allegation is made, a trained CAF protective service screener, who will determine whether or not the allegation of abuse or neglect falls within the legal definition under Oregon statutes, will first assess it. If it does not, but there are sufficient issues of concern, the screener will ask your certifier from the DD Program to talk with you. If there is sufficient cause under statutory definition to proceed, a trained protective service assessor will be assigned. This assessor and/or a law enforcement officer will contact you. You will be informed about the allegations when you are first interviewed unless a law enforcement agency restricts disclosure because of an ongoing criminal investigation.
2. The protective service assessor and/or law enforcement officer will interview the foster child privately. If the information available at that time warrants it, some or all of the other children in your home will also be interviewed. If it is established that an incident of abuse or neglect has occurred, law enforcement will then determine if a prosecutable crime has also occurred.
3. The protective services assessor determines the level of risk to the children in your home. Some or all of the children in placement may be removed pending completion of the assessment and investigation. Children will be removed only when we believe they are at risk of abuse or neglect and, unless there is an emergency, only after approval of a supervisor or manager. Your DD Case Manager/Certifier will be consulted when possible.

4. All the CAF workers and/or DD Case Managers with responsibility for children in your home will be notified of the process. It is their responsibility to talk with the children in your home, especially if removal is felt to be necessary. The protective service assessor will assume the same responsibility in the regular worker's absence.
5. Your foster home certifier is available to provide support during the assessment. The certifier cannot discuss the specific issues of the assessment until the protective service matter is completed. The protective service assessor is your central source for specific information about the assessment.
6. If you have a local Foster Provider Association, it may be able to provide assistance to you by linking you with a consulting foster provider or peer mentor that you are entitled. A peer mentor may be any person you deem necessary for support; i.e., friend, Pastor, etc. They may be able to advocate for you and provide support and information to you.
7. Even when law enforcement investigation does not result in criminal charges, CAF will make its own determination regarding validity of the allegations and about maintaining your certification or placing children with you in the future. Your certifier will discuss concerns regarding certification and placement with you.
8. All CAF assessments will be completed as quickly as possible and the resulting decision shared with foster providers in writing. A small number of foster homes are closed as a result of such an investigation. When minor abuse is found to have occurred, foster providers can avail themselves of training services to support their determination to provide quality care to children.