

## DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 03: Initial Response/Detention

### Item 036: Child Abuse Review Team (CART)

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA](#) Mailbox

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References:

Complete revision

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### **Preamble**

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides (PPG) are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

### **Policy**

The Department of Social Services (DSS) shall ensure the safety of children and eliminate the risk of victimization by a parolee or probationer.

### **Purpose**

To establish a standardized procedure for children at risk of victimization by a parolee or probationer. A multi-agency task force with the California Department of Parole, Fresno County Department of Probation, Fresno County Family Court, Victim Services, and Fresno County DSS will collaborate to review and assess child abuse cases.

### **Introduction**

In an effort to eliminate further child victimization, implementation of CART will provide an ongoing and open exchange of information among participating agencies. Participating agencies will provide a staff representative to attend bi-monthly multi-agency review team meeting for ongoing assessment of child abuse cases. Education and training on child abuse related topics and cross training related to each agency's functions and legal parameters will be provided, as needed. Specialized child abuse caseloads will be created in Fresno County Probation and Fresno County Parole. Participating agencies will be available to conduct joint home calls with Social Worker (SW) on an as needed basis.

As a member of a multi-disciplinary team, each participating agency is permitted to discuss and review other agency's relevant case information to attain the goal of reducing child abuse. Yet, each member's agency remains bound by applicable confidentiality laws to keep confidential their own information as well as the information supplied by other member agencies. The member agencies may discuss issues concerning a parolee or probationer's past criminal history of child abuse in order to prevent further child abuse. This legal exchange of information includes the ability of the member law enforcement agencies to review and take notes from relevant Child Welfare Services (CWS) referral cases files regardless of the file's open or closed status. Providing copies from CWS files (open or closed), however, requires a Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) §827 petition and a court order granting the petition. This information sharing process allows for an open exchange of information among the CART member agencies while preserving the confidentiality of the information from individuals and non-member agencies.

## **Procedure**

### **Submitting a CART Report**

A staff member or participating agency will email the [CART Report Form](#) (CWS 0095) to [DSS CART](#). Any case that meets CART criteria will have a mandatory staffing held upon a parolee/probationer's release from custody.

### **Clearing Participants Involved**

The CART SW will clear the parolee/probationer's name listed on the [CART Report Form](#) in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). If the parolee/probationer's name is not found in CWS/CMS or in the CalWIN system or it is not linked to any children, the CART SW will attempt to clear the victim's name, if it listed on the [CART Report Form](#).

- If the victim's name is not found in CWS/CMS or the CalWIN system, the CART SW will contact the Fresno County DSS Education Liaisons for assistance in locating the child's school of attendance.
- The CART SW may also contact Victim Services to obtain the victim's most recent address.
- If the victim's name is not listed on the [CART Report Form](#), the CART SW must attempt to obtain the police report (within Fresno County) in order to clear the victim's name.
- Occasionally, the [CART Report Form](#) lists a different county for the police report. The case will be cleared in CWS/CMS. If the system does not show any children in Fresno County having access to the parolee/probationer, it is sent back to the parole agent/probation officer letting them know there is no record of the parolee/probationer having access to children in Fresno County. The parole agent/probation officer may contact the other county regarding the victim.
- If CWS/CMS indicates the parolee/probationer and the victim resides in another county, the CART SW will determine if there is an open case and provide the parole agent/probation officer the assigned SW's name and phone number.

### **Current Child Protective Services (CPS) Case**

The CART SW will review the CART report and assess if a Child Protective Services (CPS) referral will be generated using the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool. The CART SW will also provide notification to the assigned SW of information contained in the CART report. The assigned SW will consult with the parole agent or probation officer. The assigned SW will review the conditions of parole or probation and inform dependency court of the conditions.

- For example, it was found that the parolee/probationer was having court ordered visits with his or her children but a condition of his or her parole/probation was not to have contact with any children.

The assigned SW will contact the care providers and review the visitation orders and any limitations on contact with the parolee or probationer.

The assigned SW will notify the CART SW of the result of the contact with the parole agent or the probation officer and care provider.

A written CART response will be completed by the CART SW and sent to the parole agent or probation officer [CART Report Form](#). The mandated reporter letter that is generated in CWS/CMS is not to be sent.

### **Generating a CPS Referral**

The CART SW will generate an emergency response referral when it is determined that the parolee or probationer has access to the minor victim and/or other potential minor victims using information provided in [CART Report Form](#) or other collateral contacts.

It should be noted that many of the parolees and probationers may have more than one family unit. The CART SW will assess the need for a referral to be completed for each family unit, as needed.

If the victims are now adults, the adult victims will be cleared to determine they have children. If they do, a CPS referral may be generated on the victim's children per SDM criteria.

### **Investigation of Referrals resulting from CART Reports**

The CART SW will investigate referrals resulting from CART reports in accordance with DSS PPG 03-03-008 "Assessment in Investigation of Abuse/Neglect Reports". In addition, the minors will be assessed for risk and contact with the parolee or probationer.

If the child is determined to be at risk, the CART SW may request a WIC § 300 protective hold from probation or law enforcement. A protective hold cannot be requested from parole.

If a protective hold is not required, face to face contact will be made with the care provider of the children. The care providers will be informed of the conditions of parole or probation and an assessment is conducted on the care provider's ability to be protective of the children. The care provider is advised that the parolee or probationer could be returned to jail or prison for violation of the conditions.

If the children are determined to be at-risk of abuse or neglect a Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting will be scheduled and the parole agent or probation officer will be requested to attend.

### **Closing the Referral**

The CART SW will send a CART advisement letter to the care provider reviewing the information discussed during the investigation. The letter will include information regarding the possible consequences should the care provider fail to protect the children, the parole agent or probation officer's name and phone number, and the CART SW's contact information. Upon completion, the CART advisement letter, CART report, and any supporting documentation will be imported into CWS/CMS according to the Purging and Scanning Guide located on the [DSS Net](#) portal.

### **Correspondence with the Referring Agency**

A written response will be sent to the referral agency that includes the number of family units, that a home call was completed, and the current situation such as:

- The referring agency is told that the care provider does not want contact with the parolee or probationer.
- Referring agency is informed of the contact the care provider had when the parolee/probationer was incarcerated.

### **Additional Responsibilities of the CART SW**

The CART SW will attend bimonthly meetings with the liaisons from parole and probation to review current reports.

The CART SW will arrange for the case managing SW to attend the CART meeting, or attend on their behalf, when the case assigned to the case manager is going to be reviewed.