

MISSISSIPPI CODE of 1972

*** Current through the 2012 Regular Session ***

TITLE 43. PUBLIC WELFARE
CHAPTER 15. CHILD WELFARE
ARTICLE 2. MULTIDISCIPLINARY CHILD PROTECTION TEAMS

Miss. Code Ann. § 43-15-51 (2012)

§ 43-15-51. Formation of multidisciplinary child protection teams to evaluate and investigate reports of child abuse and neglect; membership; order of Youth Court prerequisite to formation of teams; participation by experts and child advocacy centers; disclosure of information obtained from task force meetings prohibited

(1) The district attorneys or the Department of Human Services may initiate formal cooperative agreements with the appropriate agencies to create multidisciplinary child protection teams in order to implement a coordinated multidisciplinary team approach to intervention in reports involving alleged severe or potential felony child physical or sexual abuse, exploitation, or maltreatment. The multidisciplinary team also may be known as a child abuse task force. The purpose of the team or task force shall be to assist in the evaluation and investigation of reports and to provide consultation and coordination for agencies involved in child protection cases. The agencies to be included as members of the multidisciplinary team are: the district attorney's office, city and county law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, youth court prosecutors, and other agencies as appropriate.

(2) To implement the multidisciplinary child abuse team, the team or task force must be authorized by court order from the appropriate Youth Court. The court order will designate which agencies will participate in the cooperative multidisciplinary team.

(3) (a) Teams created under this section may invite other persons to serve on the team who have knowledge of and experience in child abuse and neglect matters. These persons may include licensed mental and physical health practitioners and physicians, dentists, representatives of the district attorney's office and the Attorney General's office, experts in the assessment and treatment of substance abuse or sexual abuse, the victim assistance coordinator of the district attorney's office and staff members of a child advocacy center.

(b) (i) A child advocacy center means an agency that advocates on behalf of children alleged to have been abused and assists in the coordination of the investigation of child abuse by providing a location for forensic interviews and promoting the coordination of services for children alleged to have been abused. A child advocacy center provides services that include, but are not limited to, forensic medical examinations, mental health and related support services, court advocacy,

consultation, training for social workers, law enforcement training, and child abuse multidisciplinary teams; and staffing of multidisciplinary teams.

(ii) Child advocacy centers may provide a video-taped forensic interview of the child in a child friendly environment or separate building. The purpose of the video-taped forensic interview is to prevent further trauma to a child in the investigation and prosecution of child physical and sexual abuse cases. Child advocacy centers can also assist child victims by providing therapeutic counseling subsequent to the interview by a qualified therapist. Child advocacy centers can also assist law enforcement and prosecutors by acquainting child victim witnesses and their parents or guardians to the courtroom through child court school programs.

(4) A team or task force created under this section shall review records on cases referred to the team by the Department of Human Services or law enforcement or the district attorney's office. The team shall meet at least monthly.

(5) No person shall disclose information obtained from a meeting of the multidisciplinary team unless necessary to comply with Department of Human Services' regulations or conduct and proceeding in Youth Court or criminal court proceedings or as authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction.

HISTORY: SOURCES: Laws, 2002, ch. 339, § 1, eff from and after July 1, 2002.