

Collateral Contacts in Non-Emergency Investigations

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Parents and subjects of a child abuse/neglect investigation have the right to refuse to cooperate or be interviewed, absent a search warrant or other court order. This does not mean that your immediate response is to return to the agency and close your file. Be sure to thoroughly review Kansas Code for the Care of Children and the Prevention and Protection Services (PPS) Policy and Procedure manual for assessments and investigations and to consult with your supervisor on a regular basis for advice and direction. You and your supervisor will seek legal advice, if necessary.

The following are some suggestions for taking the investigation a few steps further so a determination can be made about whether an Ex Parte can be obtained from the court or a request for Police Protective Custody can be made; or if, in fact, the case can be closed, following some additional due diligence. You do not need a signed release to obtain the following information:

1. If the Alleged Victim (ALV) and siblings attend a public school, you are entitled to receive information, without written consent of the parent, guardian or legal custodian. The information includes:
 - Student's name, address, telephone listing
 - Date and place of birth
 - Major field of study
 - Participation in officially-recognized activities and sports
 - Weight and height of members of athletic teams
 - Dates of attendance, date of graduation and award received
2. If the children are home-schooled, during the assessment of a report which is assigned to assess for a child not attending school as required by law, the Kansas Department for Children and Families shall determine whether the private/home school is registered with the Kansas Board of Education. Verification with Kansas Board of Education can be made by calling 785-296-6066. (PPM 2732)

3. Criminal and Civil Cases are public records. Go online to access your local records. The criminal docket only provides felonies committed in the county, and does not provide information on offenses in municipalities or other counties.

Checking the civil docket for divorce and domestic violence cases can also be helpful. Be sure to also check the local municipal court in which the subjects of the investigation reside for any closed or pending case information.

4. Police Reports. Contact the local police department in which the child and/or parents/guardian or custodian reside to see if any calls were made to the police from the home, or if visits were made to the subject premises by the police.
5. Caregivers. If you have knowledge that a grandparent, relative or other caregiver provides care from time to time to the alleged child victim, contact the caregiver. Identify whom you are, title, agency and agency mandate. Indicate that a report was received – for example – that little Johnny has marks and bruises on his neck and face, and ask whether the caregiver knows how this might have happened. Stay child focused.

Caution: Do not share information about the family. Further, discretion must be exercised in the selection of collateral sources to protect the family or out-of-home care setting’s right to privacy. To protect the confidentiality of the principals, persons shall not be randomly interviewed.

6. Check the federal and state prisons websites: <https://kdocrepository.doc.ks.gov/kasper/> [Kansas Adult Supervised Population Electronic Repository: this links to the Kansas Criminal Justice Information System]; and www.bop.gov [Federal Prisons: Bureau of Prisons].
7. For genealogy, birth and death records: www.rootsweb.com
8. 411 On-line: www.411locate.com
9. Birthdays: www.anybirthday.com
10. Sex offender registry by state: www.sexoffender.com

Be sure to check the Parent/Relative Locator Section’s brochure and investigative tips for further assistance.

Please keep in mind that when a parent or other subject of the investigation “slams the door in your face,” and tells you to “get off my property and don’t come back,” this does not mean that you should throw in the towel on the investigation. Wait a few hours or the next day to allow the subject to “cool off,” and give them a telephone call to try to reschedule a visit, or suggest an alternate site for the interview. Document the attempted home interview and the telephone call. If the subject is still uncooperative, send a letter. The letter should mention the attempted home visit, telephone call, and another request for their cooperation with the interview. Consulting with your supervisor during this process is always recommended.

Be sure to consult with your supervisor frequently so that as the situation changes, or not, your supervisor can advise you accordingly of next steps.