



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION  
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November 10, 2016

**To:**

Children's Administration All Staff

**From:**

Jennifer A. Strus, Assistant Secretary  
Children's Administration

**Subject:**

Sibling Sexual Abuse

Effective immediately, all intakes containing allegations of sibling sexual abuse and coded as neglect by the parent or caregiver will be assigned for Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation.

An issue regularly raised by our own staff and by external stakeholders is the assignment of intakes to FAR that involve an alleged crime. Sibling sexual abuse is coded as neglect because allegations are made against adults, not children; however, sibling sexual abuse should be referred to law enforcement for investigation. The RCW governing FAR clearly states that any allegation concerning a possible crime will be assigned for investigation. While allegations of abuse against children can constitute a crime, it is evident that not every screened-in intake will be investigated by law enforcement or considered a crime. These intakes typically allege low to moderate risk neglect allegations. Children who are allegedly sexually abused by a sibling or otherwise should be interviewed separately, coordinating the interview with law enforcement or the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC). See [Washington State CAC Locations](#).

Sibling sexual abuse cases fall under the protocol requiring a multi-disciplinary approach to the investigation (RCW 26.44.180, RCW 26.44.185). Program and Policy is in the process of gathering the county protocols and will provide links to the protocols on the CA intranet page. Program and Policy will also update the intake policy for January 2017 policy roll-out to reflect this change.