

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES



INTER-OFFICE MEMO

**TO:** All Staff

**FROM:** Trista D. Piccola *TR*  
Director  
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Executive Counsel  
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Child Protective Services

**DATE:** March 6, 2017

**SUBJECT:** CPS Reports – Corporal punishment – Children in family foster homes

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The process for screening reports of child abuse and neglect for family foster homes requires a clarification with respect to reports that do not meet the criteria for child abuse and neglect investigations. Recently, we have identified cases wherein a family foster home was the subject of CPS investigation for conduct that would not warrant an investigation if the caretaker's actions were committed by the child's parent. Such investigations relate to allegations in which a caretaker in a family foster care home has spanked or slapped a child as a means of discipline and there is no evidence of injury or potential risk of injury to the child.

As we work toward achieving consistency in responding to child abuse and neglect reports, the Department should screen such reports in accord with the agency's general practice relating to allegations of child abuse and neglect. As such, in the absence of any allegations of child abuse or neglect, reports relating to slapping or spanking of a child in a foster family setting should be classified as an "Information and Referral" where there exists no evidence of injury or potential risk of harm to the child. Such reports will be referred by CPS to the DCYF Licensing Unit for follow up with the family foster care provider with respect to regulatory review.

Please know we take all reports involving our children seriously and want to ensure our response is appropriate to the circumstances.