



INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Lori Torres, Inspector General

OFFICE: INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES (DCS)
TITLE: DCS CASEWORKER FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS
CASE ID: 2019-05-0133
DATE: July 9, 2020

Inspector General Staff Attorney Kelly Elliott, after an investigation by Special Agent Michael Lepper, reports as follows:

The Indiana General Assembly charged the Office of Inspector General (OIG) with addressing fraud, waste, abuse and wrongdoing in the executive branch of state government. I.C. § 4-2-7-2(b). The OIG also investigates criminal activity and ethics violations by state workers. I.C. § 4-2-7-3.

I. Complaint

On April 29, 2019, the OIG received a complaint alleging that former Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Family Case Manager (FCM) Brittney Moore falsified entries made in internal agency records regarding visits with children on her caseload. DCS terminated Moore on April 24, 2019.

II. DCS Policies

DCS maintains a Child Welfare Policy Manual (Manual). Chapter 4 of the Manual outlines the requirements of a DCS FCM in the assessment of a report of child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N report). Chapter 4, Section 4 of the Manual, "Required Interviews,"¹ states that the DCS FCM is

¹ The complaint alleged that Moore's misconduct occurred from January through March 2019. Special Agent Lepper reviewed Version 4 of Chapter 4, Section 4, which was effective on January 1, 2012 and is the current version of the policy.

required to conduct interviews² with the following individuals in all child abuse or neglect assessments: “1. The alleged child victim; 2. All other children living in the home and any children not living in the home who were present at the time of the alleged incident; 3. The parent, guardian, or custodian; 4. The alleged perpetrator” The Manual states that the FCM is required to conduct or arrange an individual face-to-face interview with the alleged child victim.

Chapter 4, Section 38 of the Manual, “Assessment Initiation,”³ states that the DCS FCM will initiate every child abuse and/or neglect assessment within the appropriate timeframes as determined by Indiana law.⁴ The Manual states that the FCM’s face-to-face contact with all the alleged child victims will constitute the initiation of a child abuse and/or neglect assessment. Section 38 further states that the FCM will document the face-to-face contact with each alleged child victim in the Management Gateway for Indiana Kids (MaGIK), DCS’s case management system.

III. OIG Investigation

OIG Special Agent Michael Lepper conducted an investigation into this matter. Special Agent Lepper learned that MaGIK automatically generates a notice to a FCM’s supervisor if that FCM has not completed a required action, such as initiating and/or closing an assessment within a required period. FCM supervisors have found that entries FCMs make in MaGIK that are brief and lack required details are often signs of false reports.

² Chapter 4, Section 4 of the Manual states, “An interview occurs when a person is individually questioned about the allegations of a CA/N report not in the presence of family members or witnesses.”

³ During the period of time of Moore’s alleged misconduct (January through March 2019), the Manual maintained two versions of Chapter 4, Section 38 (Version 6, effective from July 1, 2018 through February 28, 2019, and Version 7, effective from March 1, 2019 through April 30, 2019). For purposes of this investigation, Special Agent Lepper reviewed Version 6 and Version 7 of Chapter 4, Section 38. The relevant policy cited is contained in both versions.

⁴ According to Version 6 and Version 7 of Chapter 4, Section 38, initiation of a child abuse and/or neglect assessment ranges from one hour to five days based on the nature of the allegation. The current version of Chapter 4, Section 38 provides that response times range from two hours to five days.

Special Agent Lepper learned that Moore served as an assessment FCM in the Lake County local DCS office. Special Agent Lepper reviewed the alleged falsified MaGIK entries identified by DCS's internal investigation. Special Agent Lepper also conducted interviews with DCS employees, children on Moore's caseload and the children's caregivers. Additionally, he reviewed DCS policies and Moore's personnel file.

Based on the findings of his investigation, Special Agent Lepper determined that Moore falsified entries made in MaGIK as the entries related to face-to-face visits with seven children⁵ and four caregivers. For each of the falsified entries made in MaGIK, Special Agent Lepper found that the MaGIK entry contained limited information. Furthermore, Special Agent Lepper and/or DCS interviewed the caregivers for each child in question, and each caregiver verified that the alleged visit(s) with the child/children did not occur.

Special Agent Lepper interviewed Moore regarding the questionable entries she made in MaGIK. She admitted to making false entries regarding face-to-face visits with the children and caregivers in question. Moore stated that prior to DCS terminating her employment, she maintained a caseload of forty-nine assessments or reports assigned to her.⁶ She stated she falsified the entries to "buy time," but she knew it was wrong.

IV. Conclusion

The OIG submitted the results of this investigation to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office. On July 8, 2020, the Lake County Prosecutor charged Moore with four counts of Falsifying Child

⁵ Special Agent Lepper found that Moore conducted face-to-face interviews with two of the seven children; however, Moore's entry in MaGIK indicated the interview took place in the home. Special Agent Lepper found that Moore's face-to-face interview with the two children took place at a school.

⁶ During Moore's employment with DCS, I.C. § 31-25-2-5 stated FCMs could maintain caseloads with no more than "(1) twelve (12) active cases relating to initial assessments, including investigations of an allegation of child abuse or neglect; or (2) seventeen (17) children monitored and supervised in active cases relating to ongoing services." In 2019, the General Assembly amended I.C. § 31-25-2-5 to modify the number of children or families a FCM may maintain on his/her caseload.

Abuse or Neglect Information or Records, all as class A misdemeanors. Accordingly, this investigation is closed.

Dated: July 9, 2020

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Torres". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Lori Torres, Inspector General