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## Human Trafficking of Children Indicator Tool

This tool is for Child Protective Investigators to assist them in understanding human trafficking and identifying children who are victims. It **does not** represent all instances of human trafficking or areas that may be explored to determine if human trafficking is present.

Florida and Federal law both define human trafficking. Trafficking of children is generally understood to be:

*The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a child for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Under federal law, sex trafficking (such as prostitution, pornography, exotic dancing, etc.) **does not** require there be force, fraud, or coercion if the victim is under 18.*

*Trafficking victims may be smuggled into and within the U.S., arrive with a legitimate visa or be U.S. citizens.*

*Trafficking occurs in many different situations including domestic servitude, construction, landscaping, the sex industry, factories and sweatshops migrant farm work, service industries such as nursing homes, cleaning services, bars and restaurants and the food industry.*

### Possible indicators of human trafficking:

The child:

- Shows evidence of physical, mental, or sexual abuse
- Cannot or will not speak on own behalf and/or is non-English speaking
- Is not allowed to speak to you alone
- Is being controlled
- Does not have access to identity and/or travel documents
- Works unusually long hours and is unpaid or paid very little
- Will not cooperate, e.g., gives you wrong information about identity and living situation
- Is not in school or has significant gaps in schooling
- Lives at his/her workplace or with employer and/or lives with many people in a small area
- Has a heightened sense of fear and distrust of authority
- Has engaged in prostitution or commercial sex acts

### Interview Considerations:

- Use an interpreter if the victim does not speak fluent English.
  - If you need an interpreter, contact an independent and trusted source for help in interpretation.
  - Do not use children, adults, neighbors, or friends who are present at the scene to interpret.

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Mission of the Florida Department of Children and Families: Protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.

- Make sure the interpreter is not allied with the trafficker.
  - Make sure the interpreter understands trafficking.
  - Understand how to work with interpreters and that it can be a slow process that requires word for word interpretation (not summaries).
- It is rare for child victims of human trafficking to identify themselves as being trafficked. More often than not, victims will present to the Department or Community Based Care providers due to another form of abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
  - If you suspect a child is a victim of human trafficking, it is important that the child be gently interviewed and that the suspected trafficker(s) not be present, because during interviewing process, the trafficker(s) may try to intimidate the child or not allow the child to speak for themselves. Question him or her from an unbiased and non-judgmental point of view. Doing otherwise could discourage them from being truthful or seeking help from the Department or Community Based Care, law enforcement or other providers.
    1. The child may be frightened of threats or retribution by the trafficker when the authorities get involved. The child may also fear being taken from familiar people or places.
    2. The child could be embarrassed and ashamed by the work s/he was forced to do and the abuse s/he endured.
    3. The child's cultural norms may make talking to you or about these experiences very difficult.
  - Know that it may take several interviews to establish trust and a long time to determine if a child has been trafficked.
  - Be sensitive to cultural and religious differences and seek help to understand them prior to the interview.
  - Be aware that the child's parent or caregiver may also be the child's trafficker and that the trafficker may lie and say s/he is the child's parent or caregiver.
  - Remember that every human trafficking case is different.
  - Do not ask about immigration at the beginning of the interview; this can be intimidating.

**What to do if you suspect or discover that a child is trafficked:**

1. **Call 911** if there is **immediate danger** or a medical emergency.
2. You must **add Human Trafficking as a maltreatment** along with any other alleged maltreatments before closing the case. If there is not an open investigation, call the Florida Abuse Hotline and report human trafficking. (800-96-ABUSE or 800-962-2873)
3. If you suspect human trafficking, **contact law enforcement**. You may call the U.S. Department of Justice at 888-428-7581 or the following local anti-trafficking task force Points of Contact at the three United States Attorneys Offices in Florida to report the crime:

*Northern District – 850-942-8439 ~ Middle District – 239-461-2225 ~ Southern District – 305-961-9001*

4. If you **need more information** concerning human trafficking, contact the Department of Children and Families, Refugee Services: 850-488-3791. If law enforcement is not available, please contact the Anti-Trafficking in Person's Hotline at 202-401-4732.

| QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER  | INFORMATION TO BE ALERT TO   |
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| <p><b>Living Environment</b></p> <p><i>Asking where the child lives (bathes, eats and sleeps), as well as his or her family situation can reveal a great deal. Ask the child to show you where they sleep, eat, bathe, play, go to school, or work. In addition, the child’s ability to leave the home and play, as well as visit friends will also indicate levels of control and possible trafficking.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child’s “home” environment likely will lack personal effects, or the child’s “room” will be shabby, small and different from the rest of the house. His/her bed may be crammed in small spaces with other cots or sleeping pallets. No or few toys will be present.</li> <li>• The yard may be fenced and access to phones denied.</li> <li>• The child may be forced to live in the same place s/he works (such as behind a restaurant, in a motel with other workers, etc.)</li> <li>• The child may not know where s/he is living because the traffickers might lie to the child about their whereabouts, move them around or may and isolate them so they cannot establish relationships and get help.</li> <li>• Traffickers severely restrict the child’s movements and ability to contact anyone, play with other children and develop friendships or speak to anyone. Even if allowed to leave the home, the child is likely afraid to escape because of the trafficker’s threats and control.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>State of Mind</b></p> <p><i>Asking about threats to the child or child’s family can be important, as is determining if the child has been hit, or otherwise harmed as punishment or as a way to deter the child from running away and complying with the trafficker’s demands.</i></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffickers may threaten to have the child deported or arrested if s/he tries to leave, call the police or disobey the rules.</li> <li>• Traffickers often use violent retribution when a child disobeys. They may harm the child physically or mentally, e.g., by threatening to hurt them or their family members if they try to leave the trafficker. The child may be scared to leave because the trafficker has identification/immigration documents or the child knows s/he is not in the US legally. The child may also have been told by parents to obey the trafficker, to work and to send money home.</li> <li>• The trafficker may deny and minimize any information given by the child regarding harm or force. The trafficker may say that they have the child’s or parents’ consent to work or be in Florida.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>School and Work</b></p> <p><i>Asking questions about daily routines can help paint the picture – school, or in the alternative, work will help you to understand if the child is being trafficked. Asking about any money they owe the “boss” or if they get paid can also provide key information.</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child victims of trafficking typically do not attend school. When they do go to school, they may appear underfed, may wear badly worn or dirty clothes, or may appear shy or frightened. They may also have a history of truancy or of acting out, be aggressive, depressed or have disciplinary referrals.</li> <li>• Child victims often are forced to work to pay off their “debt” rather than attend school. Any money that the child earns is usually deducted from the debt that the traffickers say they owe. This debt often includes payment for travel expenses, clothing, food, and/or rent.</li> </ul>  |

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| <p><b>School and work (continued)</b></p> <p><i>Note: younger children may not understand issues like a debt or who their boss is – these areas may only be appropriate for older children.</i></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost of these items is usually exaggerated by the trafficker. Investigators should note how many hours per day or week the child works, how or if they are compensated, and if they receive their earnings directly or via their employer or someone else.</li> <li>• The trafficker may deny that the child is being forced to work, commit commercial sex acts or may claim that the child’s wages are being sent home to help his/her family.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Other considerations</b></p> <p><i>Where the child’s family lives, their birthplace, how they arrived in the U.S. and/or Florida are ways to find out if the child has been tricked, sold or is being trafficked.</i></p> <p><i>Asking about immigration status can be threatening and is not recommended to do at the beginning. A child may not know details about passports and other identification papers either.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are often transported across international and/or state borders as well as within a state.</li> <li>• The child may be abducted but often is recruited with the promise of getting a job, going to school, reuniting with family or having basic needs met (such as shelter). Children come with the hope they can work to help their impoverished families. Parents may sell their children or unwillingly give them over to the care of a trafficker who promises to give the children an education, raise them and give them work. Once in the hands of the trafficker, children may be often forced or coerced into working or forced to work off a travel “debt”.</li> <li>• Immigration and identification documents may be held by the child’s trafficker or employer to deter escape.</li> <li>• Traffickers can be relatives, friends, or other individuals. They may also be from the same ethnic background.</li> <li>• There is always a risk that any adults present may be traffickers or allied with them. The trafficker may pose as a relative or may actually be related to the child. During interviewing process, they may try to intimidate the child or speak for the child. If trafficking is suspected the child should be interviewed without the suspected trafficker.</li> </ul> |