

CPS Investigator Training Academy

Description of Courses

Week one courses

Introduction to CPIT: This course will discuss the history and development of Child Protective Investigation Teams (CPIT) within Tennessee. It will provide an overview of the organization, structure and laws associated with CPITs. Additionally, the development, utilization, and function of Tennessee's Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) will be discussed.

The Medical Evaluation of Child Sexual Abuse: This course will discuss the details of the medical evaluation in cases of sexual abuse, including the location, type, and timeliness of the examination. The course will also cover the various physical signs of sexual abuse such as injuries and sexually transmitted infections, as well as common mimics of sexual abuse.

The Medical Evaluation of Child Physical Abuse and Neglect: This course will provide medical information about the common types of injuries seen in physically abused and neglected children, including details about injury mechanism and distinguishing accidental from abusive injuries. The type and timeliness of the medical evaluation will also be covered.

The Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline: This course will provide an overview of the interworkings of the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline (CAH). This course will increase knowledge of how the CAH answer calls, gather critical information and input necessary data into TFACTS. Additionally, how case managers make decisions surrounding referrals to various program areas and how the CAH leadership tracks, trends and utilizes data to inform their practice will be discussed. Following this course, shadowing case managers at the CAH will occur.

John E. Reid Child Abuse Investigations: This course presented by John E. Reid and Associates focuses on the distinction between interviewing and interrogation as well as the factors affecting a subject's behavior. The course additionally will discuss the common characteristics of individuals who are inclined to sexually or physically abuse a child. This course will also illustrate how to identify who to interview and how to interview a child abuser and the importance of looking at the offense through the eyes of the offender.

Human Trafficking: This course will show how real human trafficking is in the State of Tennessee. It will provide basic knowledge on the slavery of children and women forced to perform sex acts for money at various locations. This course will also focus on what signs to look for when identifying human trafficking victims and identifying a targeted age group.

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Tennessee Sex Offender Registry: This course will provide basic information concerning the Tennessee Sex Offender Registry and the TBI's role.

Situational Awareness: This course will provide an understanding of how to manage situational awareness to maximize the opportunity for success in crisis situations. The course will additionally explain that a clear perception of the environmental surroundings is crucial for safety.

Defensive Tactics: [also known as CQC, Close Quarter Combat] This course will provide knowledge of effective self-defense tactics that will ensure survival with the minimal physical force necessary. The course will additionally provide tactics for neutralizing or stopping an attack without permanently silencing the opponent.

Week two courses

Drug Identification: Recognizing drugs, paraphernalia and drug-related behavior during an encounter can be the keys to in-depth investigations and safety for all involved. In this course, common drug classification, their appearances and their effects will be presented. Knowledge of the dangers of common drugs of abuse, and their relationship to the user and how users may react toward authority will be taught.

Recognizing and Documenting Impairment/Drug Use: This course will present how to recognize when a person is impaired. It will also teach several informal observations to be aware of, such as; slurred speech, loss of thought, body language, color of eyes, poor fine motor skills, etc. The course will additionally teach how to use factual and descriptive indicators of impairment in reporting.

Meth, Meth Labs and Drug Trucks: This course explores the investigation, evaluation, and identification of meth labs and meth use. Additionally, how to appropriately respond when a meth lab is present will be discussed.

John E. Reid Physical Neglect and Child Abuse Reconstruction

Techniques: This course will emphasize the specific techniques that can be used in the assessment, investigation and reconstruction of cases involving soft tissue injuries such as bruises, lacerations and burns. In addition, the various weapons utilized by the offender in child abuse situations will be identified and discussed. The course will also address the circumstances and evaluation of deprived and neglected children.

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John E. Reid Emerging Trends in Child Sex Abuse: This course explores strategic planning that is required in conducting a step-by-step and comprehensive investigation of the circumstances in suspected child sexual abuse cases, as well as accountability issues pertaining to the caretaker and other family members. The course also examines the identification of potential corroborating witnesses, the joint collection of essential facts and the recognition and recovery of different types of specific evidence all of which can narrow the focus of the investigation.

Cultural Competence: This course will present the importance of being sensitive to cultural and individual differences, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, ability level/disability, and socioeconomic status. The course will also provide knowledge of how to maintain awareness as well as respect in diverse cultural environments.

Basic Court Systems: This course provides knowledge of the court processes and protocols. It will teach when and how arrests are made, and how a criminal case proceeds through the state and federal court systems.

CPS Investigations Policy and Effective Use of Work Aids: This course examines state and federal laws which influence the development of DCS policies. Strategies for implementing policies in practice and how to effectively use work aids to efficiently complete tasks will be taught. Also included in this course are requirements of border agreements with neighboring states.

Juvenile Court Systems: This course will provide specific information about juvenile court systems and their protocols.

Conflict Management: This course will discuss how to strategically resolve conflict situations, how conflict management is essential in de-escalating a potential crisis, and how to use tactical communication skills to maintain mental and emotional safety in potentially volatile situations. The techniques learned will demonstrate how to direct the negative energy in a verbal conflict and diffuse the situation. Controlling how to respond to conflict is important when applying verbal self-defense skills efficiently and appropriately.

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Milo: This course provides a simulated experience for conducting home visits. During this experience participants will recognize safety concerns and learn how to respond to potentially aggressive situations.

Week three courses

Statement Analysis: This course will provide tools for taking initial written statements and analyzing them for indicators of deception.

Case File Organization: This course will teach how to manage documents and evidence in an investigation. The course will also provide an understanding of the importance of how case file organization can be key to finding requested documents or evidence as well as how to make a case file a resourceful tool when taking the stand in court after a great deal of time has passed since the respective events.

Case File Documentation: This course will teach the critical considerations of case file documentation. Additionally, the course will cover the opening and closing of cases, summations, listing witnesses, listing evidence, documenting interviews, and providing evidence in a case file. The course will also include useful vocabulary to increase the strength of the reports.

Case Presentation: This course will provide useful information about how to effectively and efficiently present a case to CPIT. A mock CPIT will be conducted with a debriefing session to follow.

Mock Court: This course is designed to show trial procedures and legal methods. This course will provide the opportunity to participate in rehearsed trials to prepare for testifying, presenting evidence, and being cross examined in court.

Time Management: This course provides strategies on how to effectively manage time to complete job responsibilities without compromising job quality. Additionally, how to prioritize and evaluate job tasks will be discussed.