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Family guide to child protection

This guide is to help understand what social services staff does when a report of child maltreatment is accepted.

This guide is for:

- Parents
- Alleged offenders
- Others who may give information about a child maltreatment concern.

When social services staff gets a report, they decide if it fits what the law defines as child maltreatment. Some reports are about concerns that do not involve alleged maltreatment. When this happens, a family may be offered voluntary child welfare services.

When a report meets what the law says is child maltreatment, social services staff must do a Family Assessment or a Family Investigation. Staff needs to ensure a child is safe, and decide what to do depending on how serious a report is. Staff also wants to learn if a family is willing to work together to keep the family safe. The steps taken in the two different responses – Family Assessment or Family Investigation – is explained in this guide.

Family Assessments

A Family Assessment is done when social services staff accepts a report about a child's safety, but the report is not about sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, or a serious threat to a child's safety. Staff meets with a family to assess their needs and strengths. Social services staff works with families to address the reported concern and ensure safety of a child, but does not prove or disprove if child maltreatment occurred.

Three steps are taken as part of a Family Assessment:

1. **Decide if a child is safe, and if a family needs help to keep them safe in the future**

Social services staff meets with parents and child to decide if the child is safe. Staff also want to understand if a family needs help. Social services staff must physically see and interview children.

Social services staff must:

- Tell parents what the report is about
- Not disclose the identity of a reporter
- Meet with the child, parents and other family members
- Notify law enforcement of a report, which may result in a joint investigation.

Social services staff may interview other people who may know more about a reported concern or a child's safety.

Social services staff will share:

- Why information is needed
- How information will be used
- What parents' rights are if they decline to answer questions
- What parents' rights are about the information gathered
- What rights other people have to the same information.

Social services staff will gather information on:

- A reported concern and child's safety
- Past child maltreatment reports
- Family violence and substance abuse
- Other situations that may make a child unsafe
- Strengths and needs of a family.

Social services staff may ask for more information about a child, such as school and medical records.

A Family Assessment must be completed within 45 days of accepting a child maltreatment report.

2. Tell the results to those involved

Social services staff sends a letter to the parents or guardian of a child when a Family Assessment is completed, telling them:

- Whether or not a family needs services
- That the records are private information
- How long social services will keep the record.

Social services staff also sends a letter to those who are required by law to report child maltreatment, which tells them:

- That a Family Assessment was done to respond to their report
- That a family will or will not get services.

3. Provide services

In a Family Assessment, social services staff decides if services are needed to keep a child safe. Services are provided, if needed. If social services staff and a family agree, other services may be provided to help meet the needs of a family.

Family Investigations

A Family Investigation must be done when a report is accepted for sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, and serious threats to a child's safety. A Family Investigation may also be done for discretionary reasons determined by the social service agency. Two decisions are made in a Family Investigation:

- Did child maltreatment occur?
- Are protective services needed to make a child safe in the future?

Three steps are taken as part of a Family Investigation:

1. Gather information to learn if a child was maltreated and if services are needed

Social services staff works with law enforcement to learn if:

- A child was maltreated
- Harm was caused by something an alleged offender did, or failed to do
- Child protective services are needed.

Social services staff and law enforcement interview the child and their siblings. Interviews may happen at school or another private place.

In either response, if children are in immediate danger, they may be taken into safekeeping. Children would go to a safe environment until it is decided that it is safe for them to go home. If a child needs to be placed outside of the home, social services staff will ask the parents to give names of relatives or kin who may be able to take care of the child.

Social services staff must:

- Not disclose the identity of a reporter
- Meet with a child in person
- Interview alleged offender of maltreatment to tell them what a report is about
- Interview parents, siblings, and others who take care of the child.

Social services staff must audio record all interviews, when possible. If a report is about sexual abuse, an interview with the reported victim and other child witnesses must be video recorded, when possible.

Social services staff will also interview:

- Other children who live with, or who have lived with, alleged offender
- Medical professionals
- Others who may know about the reported maltreatment.

Social services staff will tell parents:

- Why the information is needed
- How information will be used
- What parents' rights are if they decline to answer questions
- What will happen if parents do not answer the questions
- What rights parents have to information gathered
- What rights parents have to disagree with the records
- What rights others have to the information.

Social services staff gather information on:

- Past reports of maltreatment.
- Child's age, gender and ability level.
- People who reported and their:
 - Relationship to an alleged offender.
 - Knowledge of a report.
- Alleged offender and their:
 - Age.
 - Past reports of maltreatment.
 - Criminal charges and convictions.
- Other facts to help decide if a child was maltreated.

Social services staff may need:

- Child's medical records
- A medical exam of child
- Information given by an alleged offender of maltreatment
- Other facts that help decide if a child was maltreated.

A Family Investigation must be completed within 45 days of accepting a report.

2. Share results with those involved

Within 10 days after the completion of a Family Investigation, social services staff sends a letter to the parents or guardians of a child that states:

- Whether a child was maltreated
- Whether family needs protective services
- What the reasons were for the decisions
- That social services staff followed the law when gathering information
- People's rights to information about themselves
- People's rights to ask social services staff to reconsider decisions.

Social services staff sends a letter to the alleged offender that states:

- Whether social services staff decided that a child was or was not maltreated
- Reasons for a decision
- That social services staff followed the law when information was gathered
- People's rights to certain information about themselves
- People's rights to appeal a decision.

3. Provide services

In a Family Investigation, social services staff decide if protective services are needed. If it is decided that services are needed, agencies will:

- Provide services
- Work with family to keep their child safe in the future.

If protective services are not needed, social services staff will:

- Close case record
- Offer family information about other services that could help them.

Social services staff must share results of an investigation with persons who report abuse or neglect, if required by law to make a report. Results will not be shared if it is not in a child's best interest.

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اطلب ذلك من مشرفك أو اتصل على الرقم 1-800-358-0377.

သတိ။ ဤစာရွက်စာတမ်းအားအခမဲ့ဘာသာပြန်ပေးခြင်း အကူအညီလိုအပ်ပါက၊ သင့်လူမှုရေးအလုပ်သမား အားမေးမြန်း ခြင်းသို့ မဟုတ် 1-844-217-3563 ကိုခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

កំណត់សំគាល់ ។ បើអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយក្នុងការបកប្រែឯកសារនេះដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ សូមសួរអ្នកកាន់សំណុំរឿង របស់អ្នក ឬហៅទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខ 1-888-468-3787 ។

請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請告訴您的工作人員或撥打1-844-217-3564。

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, demandez à votre agent chargé du traitement de cas ou appelez le 1-844-217-3548.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces nug koj tus neeg lis dej num los sis hu rau 1-888-486-8377.

ဟ်သုတ်ဟ်သးဘဉ်တက့ၢ်. ဝဲန့ၢ်လိၣ်ဘဉ်တၢ်မၤစၢၤကလိလၢတၢ်ကကျိးထံဝဲဒၣ်လံာ် တီလံာ်မိတခါအံၤန့ၣ်,သံကွၢ်ဘဉ်ပုၤဂ့ၢ်ဝိအပုၤမၤစၢၤတၢ်လၢနဂီၢ်မ့တ မ့ၢ်ကိးဘဉ် 1-844-217-3549 တက့ၢ်.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 담당자에게 문의하시거나 1-844-217-3565으로 연락하십시오.

ໄປຮດຊາບ. ຖ້າທ່ານ ທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປເອກະສານນີ້ພຣີ, ຈົ່ງຖາມພະນັກງານກຳກັບການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອຂອງທ່ານ ຫຼື ໂທໂທ 1-888-487-8251.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, hojjettoota kee gaafadhu ykn afaan ati dubbattuuf bilbili 1-888-234-3798.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, обратитесь к своему социальному работнику или позвоните по телефону 1-888-562-5877.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda qoraalkan, hawlwadeenkaaga weydiiso ama wac lambarka 1-888-547-8829.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, comuníquese con su trabajador o llame al 1-888-428-3438.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi nhân viên xã hội của quý vị hoặc gọi số 1-888-554-8759.

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For accessible formats of this information or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to DHS.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4670, or use your preferred relay service. ADA1 (2-18)