

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Answer
Who has a duty to report if child abuse, neglect, or dependency is suspected?	Any and every one must report suspected child abuse to your local county Social Services. You do not need to know for sure. You do not need evidence. You do not need to investigate it yourself. All that mandates a report is suspicion. (NCGS 7B-301). Definitions of abuse, neglect, and dependency can be found in the CPS Intake Manual .
What determines if a report is investigated ?	Intake social workers at Social Services take the reports and follow a state-mandated screening process . The answers provided to a series of questions will determine next steps, much like a decision tree. When making a report, it is important to be clear and thorough. Provide lots of details about why you suspect the child to be abused, neglected, or dependent. (NCGS 7B-302).
If a report is accepted for assessment or investigation, how long does it take for a social worker to respond?	<p>Immediate response – allegations of abandonment or allegations that indicate a child may be in immediate danger or at risk of substantial injury without an immediate response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24-hour response – allegations of abuse • 72-hour response – allegations of neglect or dependency <p>The timeframe will depend on the information provided in the report and the results of the decision tree. There are 16 maltreatment screening tools. The intake social worker must consult each tool that corresponds to the allegations in the report. They will use the Response Priority Tool to determine the time frame for a response. (CPS Intake Manual).</p>
How does DSS decide if they can intervene ?	<p>There must be caretaker involvement. A caretaker can be a parent, legal guardian, adult living in the child’s household, or an adult entrusted with the child’s care. If there is no caretaker involvement, then Social Services does not have jurisdiction and law enforcement must be notified. If the accused is another juvenile or someone not caring for the child, then contact law enforcement.</p> <p>If you are unsure if a caretaker is involved proceed to contact Social Services to make a report. (CPS Intake Manual).</p>

Will **law enforcement** be notified? If Social Services accepts the case for **sexual abuse, severe injuries, hospitalization, and, in some cases, inappropriate discipline a district attorney (DA) report will be made**, and law enforcement will be notified at intake. However, there may be instances during the investigation that a DA report is necessary, and in those cases, a report will be promptly made. (GS 7B-307, GS 7B-101, [CPS Intake Manual](#)).

Are there **different types of investigations**? Yes. All intake decisions are made using two-level decision-making by the intake social worker and a supervisor.
Family Assessment: For reports that contain allegations of neglect such as improper care, improper supervision, improper discipline, lack of medical care, injurious environment, etc.
Investigative Assessment: For reports of child abuse and select reports of child neglect and dependency such as human trafficking, a substantial risk of or infliction of serious physical injury, use or allowance of cruel or grossly inappropriate behavior modification tactics, sexual abuse/assault, serious emotional damage, moral turpitude, child fatality (including surviving children), children already in Social Services or law enforcement custody, hospitalized children, abandonment, methamphetamines, infant physical abuse, and medical neglect of disabled infants. ([CPS Intake Manual](#)).

Will my report be **confidential**? **Yes.** However, many times individuals will guess or put together who they think made the report. They may even say that Social Services shared that information with them, but Social Services does not share that information. (NCGS 7B).

Can my report be **anonymous**? **Yes.** You do not have to give your name, but if you do decide to give your name and contact information, Social Services will notify you and provide updates on your report. ([CPS Intake Manual](#)).

Will I receive any **updates on my report**? **Yes,** you will be notified twice if you provide your name and contact information.
1. Written notice will be sent to the person making the report within five calendar days after receipt of the report. The notice will include: information on whether the report was accepted for assessment, the date the report was made, the identity of the child if it is known, the process the reporter can take the review the agency's decision not to accept it for assessment, if a DA report was made for law enforcement, the county conducting the assessment, and a statement encouraging the reporter to contact DSS if more information is learned.
2. Within five working days of the completion of the assessment, the reporter will be notified of Social Service's findings, actions being taken, and the process for requesting a review by the DA. ([CPS Intake Manual](#) & [CPS Assessments Manual](#))

Can DSS **share case information** with schools or others in the community? **No.** All child protective services case information is confidential. The only information that can and will be shared is listed above and will be shared with the reporter only. (NCGS 7B)

Links

Child Protective Services Intake Manual

<https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional-n-z/social-services/child-welfare-services/cws-policies-manuals/>

Child Protective Services Assessments Manual

<https://policies.ncdhhs.gov/divisional-n-z/social-services/child-welfare-services/cws-policies-manuals/>