



POLICY TITLE:	Hotline		
 	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY		
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Brenda Donald - Director	April 24, 2020	June 24, 2009	April 20, 2020

I. AUTHORITY	The Director of Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and all applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations, including the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and its implementing regulations, as well as provisions in Title 4 (Chapter 13) and Title 16 (Chapter 23) of the District of Columbia Code, and the <i>LaShawn A. v. Bowser</i> Exit and Sustainability Plan (ESP).
II. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA staff and contracted employees.
III. RATIONALE	<p>CFSA is statutorily required to staff and operate a 24-hour hotline to receive reports of suspected child abuse and neglect from the District of Columbia community. The Agency is therefore required to publish policies governing the efficient operation and primary functions of the Hotline, which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive and document information from the reporting source. 2. Determine whether a report will be accepted for investigation. 3. Establish a priority for responding to an accepted report. 4. Research relevant agency records and collateral sources, including family members and support systems. 5. Promptly assign accepted reports for investigation or for other agency and community services response. 6. Promptly refer reports that are not accepted but that require Information and Referral to the appropriate agency or community resource.
IV. POLICY	<p>It is the policy of CFSA to receive and respond to reports pertaining to suspected child maltreatment (abuse and neglect) in a thorough, systematic, and timely manner. To accomplish this goal, the Agency has established and maintains a Hotline system, which is supervised by licensed clinical social workers on a 24-hour, 7-day per week basis. The Hotline shall be staffed at all times by workers specifically trained in intake and crisis intervention.</p> <p><i>For definitions of abuse and neglect, and other key terms, please refer to Attachment: Definitions. For specific details on Hotline procedures and functions, staff members should refer to the Hotline Procedural Operations Manual (HPOM)</i></p>
V. CONTENTS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Receiving Reports of Child Maltreatment B. Nature of Report C. Agency Response D. Specialty Reports
VI. ATTACHMENTS	Definitions

<p>VII. SECTIONS</p>	<p>Section A: Receiving Reports of Child Maltreatment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CFSA shall receive reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, including the sex trafficking of a minor by a non-caregiver, made to the CFSA Hotline via telephone to (202) 671-SAFE, via written/electronic correspondence or in person, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 2. In general, all reports fall into one of three categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investigations: reports that trigger an investigation, such as reports of abuse (physical, psychological, or sexual) and neglect (medical, physical, or educational). b. Information and Referral (I&R): requests for information or reports outside the parameters for CFSA involvement and reports that refer the caller to another agency or community resource (<i>See Attachment A</i>). c. Screen-out: reports that do not meet the criteria of an accepted abuse or neglect report. 3. Hotline staff search FACES.net for any history related to the child who is subject of the report and the family. If it is discovered through a FACES.net history search that a current report duplicates a report currently under investigation (with the same allegations) or the incident has been investigated previously by CPS, the current report shall be entered as a FACES.net Contact and notification sent to the appropriate parties. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. When there is an open investigation on a family and the Hotline receives a new allegation, Hotline staff shall link the new referral to the existing investigation and investigative social worker. <i>Note: Linking a referral streamlines the investigation process to ensure that the same worker handles all open allegations associated with the same family.</i> b. Accepted referrals on an open in-home case shall be referred for an investigation. 4. Hotline staff shall obtain interpreter or translation services when receiving reports from an individual in need of language assistance. Please refer to CFSA's policy on Language Access Services. 5. Hotline staff shall immediately forward reports of alleged child abuse, including child sexual abuse, to the MPD Youth and Family Services Division (YFSD) by email at cps.mpd@dc.gov. 6. The contents of all Hotline reports shall be confidential. There are, however, exceptions regarding certain information that may be released to certain individuals. Please refer to the Agency's Confidentiality Policy (Procedure B) for clarification.
	<p>Section B: Nature of Report and Agency Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hotline staff shall document all reports immediately in FACES.net whether the situation is assessed as a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation, is determined to be an I&R, or is determined to be screened-out. 2. Hotline staff may identify select reports to be referred to the Hotline RED Team for review when it is unclear whether the report should be screened in or screened out. The Hotline supervisor shall submit these reports to the RED Team, held twice each day including weekends, for review of the reports and determine next steps.

	<p>3. Hotline staff shall use the SDM[®] Child Abuse and Neglect Screening Assessment to determine whether a report should be accepted for investigation. In order for a report to the Hotline to be classified as child maltreatment and accepted for investigation, it shall meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Information of suspected maltreatment meets the definition of abuse or neglect (see Attachment A). b. The alleged victim is under the age of 18 years old or up to age 21 if the child has an open ongoing foster care case with CFSA. c. Perpetrator is the child’s parent, guardian or custodian (intra-familial abuse); or anyone legally responsible for the child’s welfare (institutional abuse); or any individual who causes a child to be trafficked (commercial sexual exploitation/sex trafficking). d. Sufficient identifying information to locate the victim or the family (such as the name of the child and/or parent, last known address or where the child can be located). e. Report is made in good faith. <p>4. Reports not meeting all of the criteria above shall be screened out or classified as I&Rs.</p> <p>5. Educational neglect reports from school staff are made via the CFSA online reporting form and shall be screened by the Educational Neglect Triage Unit within 5 business days of receipt. Screening shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reviewing the information to determine possible abuse or neglect, other than educational neglect, for immediate referral to Hotline staff. b. Contacting the school to gain additional information, if needed c. Entering the report in FACES.net (Hotline Screens) d. Determining report pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Screen-out ii. Screen-in: Educational Neglect Unit social worker shall lead the investigation to determine type of intervention or whether removal is necessary. <i>See Investigations Policy for additional information on educational neglect investigations.</i>
	<p>Section C: Agency Response</p> <p>Once a hotline screening decision is made, Hotline staff shall complete the following applicable steps:</p> <p>1. Investigations: A Hotline report that is entered into FACES.net as a referral for investigation shall be assigned one of two response times - immediate (within 2 hours) or within 24 hours (see Attachment A).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The following actions by the Hotline are required for immediate response reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Notification to the Hotline supervisor or designee for review, approval in FACES.net, and immediate assignment. ii. Notification to the designated CPS investigations supervisor who shall have responsibility of the report. iii. Immediately call 911 for assistance if the child is presumed to be in immediate danger. iv. Notification to YFSD in the event that a criminal investigation may be necessary.

	<p>b. For reports with a 24-hour response time, Hotline staff shall forward, within 2 hours, the hotline report in FACES.net to the appropriate supervisor for review, approval, and subsequent transfer via FACES.net to the CPS administrator's box for assignment to an investigation unit.</p> <p>2. I&R: Hotline staff shall forward the report to the Hotline supervisor who shall review the report and either approve it as an I&R for services provided by other public or private agencies, or have it entered into FACES.net as a referral for investigation or a screen-out.</p> <p>3. Screen-out: Hotline staff shall forward the report to the Hotline supervisor who shall review the report and either approve it as a screen-out, or have it entered into FACES.net as a referral for investigation or an I&R.</p> <p><i>Note: On a case by case basis, referrals can be brought to the attention of the Program Manager and a clinical decision made to override a decision no later than 24 hours after the screening decision is made.</i></p>
	<p>Section D: Specialty Reports</p> <p>Certain reports to the Hotline require a specific response by the Hotline staff.</p> <p>1. Other Jurisdictions: Hotline staff receiving reports involving maltreatment occurring in another jurisdiction shall document the call as an I&R and forward the report to the supervisor and to the jurisdiction where the alleged maltreatment occurred. Hotline staff shall provide the reporter with the contact information for the other jurisdiction and encourage the reporter to call the proper jurisdiction.</p> <p>2. Institutional Abuse: All reports that allege abuse and/or neglect in a resource (foster) home, congregate care facility; residential treatment facility, boarding and day schools (not DC public schools), daycare, child care, or before/aftercare facility licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE); and juvenile detention facilities operated by the DC Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) shall be documented, and forwarded consistent with the general policy stated above. In addition, if the facility is contracted by CFSA, the report shall be simultaneously forwarded to the assigned social worker and supervisor, CFSA's Office of Facility Licensing, Contract Monitoring Unit, Placement Unit, and Resource Parent Support Unit as applicable.</p> <p>Institutional abuse reports on children in the care and custody of CFSA but placed outside of the District in another jurisdiction must be reported immediately to the appropriate jurisdiction for investigation, and documented as an I&R.</p> <p>3. Missing Children in CFSA Custody: For calls involving information on missing children who are in CFSA custody, Hotline staff shall immediately notify their supervisor, the assigned social worker, the supervisory social worker, and program manager and enter the information in a contact note in FACES.net. The assigned social worker shall notify Diligent Search. See the Missing, Abducted, and Absent Children (Section A) policy for more information.</p>

4. **Child Fatalities:** Hotline staff shall immediately notify YFSD of any child fatality by email to cps.mpd@dc.gov. Staff should refer to the [Child Fatality Review \(Section B\)](#) policy for additional details. Hotline staff shall also assess if there are siblings/other household children remaining in the home and ask questions regarding their safety and risk.
 - a. All fatalities involving an allegation of abuse and/or neglect or suspicious death are referred for investigation for any child under the age of 18 (and for older youth up to age 21 if there is an open ongoing case with CFSA).
 - b. Hotline shall ensure [Critical Event Reporting Form](#) is immediately completed and sent by email to the Child Critical Event Distribution List.
5. **Commercial Sexual Exploitation/Sex Trafficking:** Hotline staff shall refer all reports that indicate alleged commercial sexual exploitation/sex trafficking, regardless of whether the alleged perpetrator is the caregiver or not, to MPD immediately and no later than 2 hours after the information is received. See the [Sex Trafficking Identification and Response](#) administrative issuance for more information.
6. **Diplomatic Immunity:** For calls alleging child maltreatment involving a child or family with diplomatic immunity, Hotline staff shall receive and document the report consistent with Sections A, B and C of this policy. Hotline staff shall immediately notify CFSA's Office of the General Council (OGC) and no investigation may proceed unless authorized by the OGC.
 - If there are calls indicating an imminent injury or risk of the child's life, the MPD should be notified, informed of the (potential) diplomatic status, and a CPS investigation should begin.
7. **Persons of Special Interest (see Attachment A):** Prior to documentation of the Hotline report in FACES.net, Hotline staff shall verbally notify the Hotline supervisor. Personnel involved in an allegation are restricted from access to the case in FACES.net on a case by case basis.
8. **Criminal Incident (Non-Caregiver):** Hotline staff with a reasonable belief that a child or youth under CFSA care and custody has been the victim of a crime, not committed by a caregiver, shall immediately contact MPD to report the incident. Hotline staff shall complete a *Critical Event Reporting Form* and forward the form to their supervisor. Hotline staff shall also contact the ongoing social worker and supervisor to inform them of the criminal incident. Hotline staff will document the report as an I&R.
9. **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) and Positive Toxicology:** Hotline reports of substance affected caregivers and their positive toxicology and/or FASD newborns shall be screened-in and assigned as CPS investigations.
 - a. Calls from hospitals to report a baby testing positive for drugs in his or her system shall be screened-in and assigned for investigation.
 - b. Calls from hospitals to report a mother who has tested positive for any drugs, but the baby does not, shall be screened-in and assigned for investigation, except where the mother has tested positive for THC only. These reports shall be sent for RED Team review.
10. **Child 13 years of age or younger with third juvenile delinquency petition:** Hotline calls concerning a child, 13 years old or younger, who has had a third juvenile delinquency petition shall be assigned for a CPS investigation concerning the child's care by their parent, guardian or custodian.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse and Neglect

See DC Code §16-2301 for a complete description of the law.

Abused Child

The term "abused" - when used with reference to a child - means

- a. infliction of physical or mental injury upon a child
- b. sexual abuse or exploitation of a child
- c. negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child

The term "abuse" does not include discipline administered by a parent, guardian, or custodian to his or her child, provided that the discipline is reasonable in manner and moderate in degree and otherwise does not constitute cruelty.

"*Sexual Abuse*" means

- a. engaging in, or attempting to engage in, a sexual act or sexual contact with a child;
- b. causing or attempting to cause of child to engage in sexually explicit conduct; or
- c. exposing a child to sexually explicit conduct.

"*Intra-Familial Abuse*" is defined by CFSA as the abuse of a child committed by a parent, guardian or custodian who is related to the child by blood, legal custody or marriage and who has assumed parental responsibilities or obligations for the child.

Neglected Child

A "neglected child" means a child

- a. who has been abandoned or abused by his or her parent, guardian, or custodian, or whose parent-, guardian, or custodian has failed to make reasonable efforts to prevent the infliction of abuse upon the child. For the purposes of this sub-subparagraph, the term "reasonable efforts" includes filing a petition for a civil protection order; or
- b. who is without proper parental care or control, subsistence, or education as required by law, or other care or control, necessary for his or her physical, mental or emotional health, and the deprivation is not due to the lack of financial means of his or her parent, guardian, or other custodian; or
- c. whose parent, guardian, or other custodian is unable to discharge his or her responsibilities to and for the child because of incarceration, hospitalization, or other physical or mental incapacity; or
- d. whose parent, guardian, or custodian refuses or is unable to assume the responsibility for the child's care, control, or subsistence and the person or institution which is providing for the child states an intention to discontinue such care; or
- e. who is in imminent danger of being abused and another child living in the same household or under the care of the same parent, guardian, or custodian has been abused; or
- f. who has received negligent treatment or maltreatment from his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; or
- g. who resided in a hospital located in the District of Columbia for at least 10 calendar days following the birth of the child, despite a medical determination that the child is ready for discharge from the hospital, and the parent, guardian, or custodian of the child has not taken any action or made any effort to maintain a parental, guardianship, or custodial relationship or contact with the child; or
- h. who is born addicted or dependent on a controlled substance or has a significant presence of a controlled substance in his or her system at birth; or
- i. in whose body there is a controlled substance as a direct and foreseeable consequence of the acts or omissions of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian; or
- j. who is regularly exposed to illegal drug-related activity in the home.

A child is not legally defined as a neglected child when the child's deprivation of parental care and control is due to a lack of financial means.

No child who in good faith is under treatment solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly-accredited practitioner thereof shall for that reason alone be considered a neglected child.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Sexual Exploitation is the sexual abuse of children and youth through the exchange of sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection, other basics of life, and/or money. Sexual exploitation includes involving children and youth in creating pornography and sexually explicit websites.

Good Faith

Good faith is an abstract and comprehensive term that encompasses a sincere belief or motive without any malice or the desire to defraud others.

Hotline RED (Review, Evaluate and Direct) Team Review

Internal multidisciplinary team which meets twice a day to determine whether reports require a child welfare response.

Information and Referral (I&R)

Reports that do not rise to the level of abuse and neglect. These calls may require consultation with a supervisor to determine the most appropriate response. Examples of an I&R report include the following:

- a. A call with no allegations of child maltreatment that involves a parent or caregiver who desires to apply for legal custody or joint custody.
- b. A call with no allegations of child maltreatment but a child who is refusing to comply with parental rules and guidelines, engaging in criminal activity, or refusing to attend school.
- c. A child in “shelter in care” or a “committed” child who has left the foster home or private agency or a child who is returning from running away.
- d. A call with no allegations of child maltreatment that involves a child was a listed as a “missing person” on the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database but was subsequently recovered by MPD shall be entered as an I&R. For further information, see *CFSA policy on [Missing, Abducted, and Absent Children](#)*.
- e. A request for social services or information with no allegations of child maltreatment.

Institutional Abuse

Maltreatment of a child in any of the following facilities located in the District of Columbia:

- a. Foster homes
- b. Congregate care facilities
- c. Residential hospital facilities
- d. Emergency care facilities, including runaway shelters and youth shelters
- e. Boarding and traditional day schools (excepting DC public schools)
- f. Licensed daycare facilities or homes
- g. Juvenile detention facilities under the jurisdiction of the District of Columbia’s Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services located in the District and Maryland.

Investigation

The investigation is the process to determine whether a child is an abused/neglected child. Its purpose is to determine if there is harm to a child, reduce the risk of harm and increase the safety of the child while simultaneously determining the need for services to support family stabilization.

Maltreatment

Used as a substitute for “abuse and/or neglect”.

Mandated Reporter

A “mandated reporter” is an individual whose professional status (e.g., employment as a social worker, physician, teacher, or counselor) legally requires the individual to report all suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate state agency. All CFSA employees are mandated reporters and must report any new allegations of abuse and neglect to the Hotline, even if the allegations are on an open investigation or on an existing case. See DC Code § 4-1321.01 et seq.

Persons of Special Interest

These include but are not limited to elected or appointed government officials, MPD officers (including officers in the Youth and Family Services Division (YFSD)), CFSA and private agency employees (including their relatives), as well as vendors and other CFSA-contracted employees, and/or a high profile incident being tracked by the media. The Director or administrator can also designate persons other than those identified above as “persons of special interest”. CFSA may restrict access to FACES.net for Hotline reports, investigations, and cases involving persons of special interest.

Report

Communication to the Hotline, either by telephone, walk-in, or other forms of written or electronic communication that alleges child maltreatment.

Response Times

24-Hour Response Time: The “24-hour response” time is assigned to a report when there is no immediate danger or imminent risk of abuse or neglect. This response time may also be designated if there is reason to conclude that physical evidence to substantiate an abuse event will be available after the end of a 24-hour investigative response.

Immediate Response Time: Assigned when a report of suspected abuse or neglect is received that indicates the child’s health or safety is in immediate danger, i.e., there is a dangerous situation that can be viewed as an emergency requiring an immediate response.

Screen-Outs

Reports that do not meet the criteria of an accepted abuse or neglect report.

Sex Trafficking

The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age, or up to age 21 if the child has an ongoing foster care case with CFSA.