
This video reviews what information you should have prepared at the time of making a child maltreatment report and what steps the local child welfare agency will take next. The first step is gathering information from the reporter, which the local child welfare agency refers to as intake.

What will you be asked?

Information gained from reporters is essential for the best screening decisions possible.

The child protection intake worker may request the following information:

Your name, phone number, your relationship to the family or child, and source of information (what you witnessed, heard, etc.)

You may be asked the name, address, age, and other identifying information regarding the alleged victim, siblings, alleged offender, other household members, or any additional witnesses.

You may be asked specific description of the allegations. When and where the alleged incident occurred and if a child is in immediate danger.

You may be asked for a description of a child’s injuries or present conditions, and your understanding of the impact of the alleged maltreatment to the child.

You may be asked about the presence of domestic violence, criminal activity, including prostitution or sex trafficking of children, weapons, or other dangerous activities in the home.

You may be asked for a description of any action specifically in response to the incident.

Whether you as the reporter would like to be notified of the initial disposition.

The child protection intake worker will attempt to solicit as much information that you know about the family and the alleged maltreatment to make the best, most informed decision possible. Therefore, an intake worker’s questions may go beyond the examples provided in this training. Although you may not have knowledge or answers to all questions asked, respond to the best of your ability. Be prepared with as many details as possible when making the report to the local child welfare agency.
What happens after a maltreatment report is made?

Local welfare agency staff may contact other people with knowledge of the child and/or family for additional information. They may also consider past reports and history of social services involvement.

Once a report is made the local child welfare agency makes a decision within 24 hours whether the report meets the legal criteria for a child protection assessment or investigation. This process is called screening.

The local child welfare agency staff considers three elements in making their decision:

One. Whether the allegation meets the statutory definition of child maltreatment according to Minnesota Statute section 626.556.

Two. There is sufficient identifying information to attempt to locate the child, or at least one member of the family.

Three. The report contains maltreatment allegations that have not been previously assessed.

Local welfare agency staff may contact other people with knowledge of the child and/or family for additional information. They may also consider past reports and history of social services involvement.

Nondiscrimination in screening.

Local child welfare agency workers will remain aware of the impact that historical trauma and current war-trauma has for families of color and American Indian families who become involved with the child protection system. Accepted child-rearing practices of the culture in which a child participate and accepted discipline practices which are not injurious to a child’s health, welfare and safety are taken into account.

Local child welfare agencies use Minnesota Statute section 626.556 alongside the Minnesota’s Intake, Screening and Response Path guidelines (DHS 5144) to ground their decision making.

When a report is screened in, it is assigned to one of the following child protection response paths. All the response paths are non-voluntary responses. Child safety is the paramount concern for all the response paths. The goals of child protection are to help achieve positive outcomes for children and their families.

The following describes the components of a family investigation response, a family assessment response and a facility investigation response.

Family investigations are assigned to the most serious reports of harm and neglect. Reports involving substantial child endangerment as well as sexual abuse reports must receive an investigation response.

Family investigations center on gathering facts, assessing/evaluating risk for subsequent child maltreatment and assessing family protective capacities related to child safety. A determination is made whether child maltreatment occurred and whether child protective services are needed.

Family assessment is assigned to reports not involving substantial child endangerment, sexual abuse or other situations of serious danger.
Family assessment focuses on assessing and or evaluating risk and engaging a family’s protective capacities and offering services. A decision is made if ongoing child protective services are needed or if family support services are jointly agreed upon.

Facility investigations are assigned when allegations of maltreatment involve children being served by licensed or unlicensed family child care providers, foster care providers, unlicensed personal care providers and legally unlicensed child care by a person as an ongoing arrangement whether paid or unpaid.

At the conclusion of a facility investigation the following decisions are made, whether child maltreatment occurred, a staff person was responsible, a facility was responsible or child protective services are needed.

Screened out reports. When a report does not meet statutory criteria, some reports may still receive a child welfare response or an offer of voluntary services.

The following reports require a child welfare response under Minnesota Statute section 626.556.

Sexually exploited youth, Child crime victim and prenatal exposure prior to birth.

In other situations, an offer of services can be made under the following program areas: Parent Support Outreach Program, Child welfare, Children’s mental health and Chemical dependency.

The local welfare agency may also refer the family or reporter to other available services or resources in the area. Some reports are referred to another lead agency, such as the Department of Human Services Licensing Division, while others do not require any further follow-up by any agency. All screened out reports are maintained in the agency’s database for five years.

Once an assessment or an investigation is completed limited information may be provided to a reporter. Privacy laws limit information that can be disclosed.

Mandated reporters can be informed of whether the report has been accepted for assessment or investigation. If accepted, in most circumstances, a reporter can receive a written summary of the conclusion of the assessment or investigation

Voluntary reporters will be informed only if they request it and is limited to an agency’s response to the report or a statement regarding child protectives are being provided.

For more information regarding mandated reporting, the department’s Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: A Resource Guide for Mandated Reporters has additional information. The guide can be found on the department’s website at: http://mn.gov/dhs.

Here are the state statutes and guidelines for Mandated Reporters. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act: Minnesota Statute section 626.556.

The statute governing reporting of prenatal exposure to controlled substances: Minnesota Statute section 626.5561.
The statute regarding the definition of Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS): Minnesota Statute section 260C.007, subdivision 6.

The administrative rule governing disclosure of records: Minnesota Administrative Rule 9560.0230.

The federal statute governing Indian children in the child welfare system: Indian Child Welfare Act, (ICWA)25 USC1901ETSEQ.


For more information on all child maltreatment guidelines see: Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening Response Path Guidelines

This has been Mandated Reporter Training - Child Protection Response. Please see the Mandated Reporter guide available online for more information.