



Bulletin

NUMBER

#15-68-19

DATE

October 1, 2015

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors
Social Services Supervisors
and Staff

Tribal Social Services
Directors and Staff

County Attorneys

Tribal Attorneys

ACTION/DUE DATE

Review and implement as
directed.

EXPIRATION DATE

October 1, 2017

Revised Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines

TOPIC

October 2015 revision of DHS-5144, "Minnesota's Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines".

PURPOSE

Inform counties and tribes of revised guidelines, and provide direction for receiving, screening, and assigning reports of alleged child maltreatment for a child protection response.

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SIGNED

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Assistant Commissioner
Children and Family Services Administration

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

Revised Guidelines

Several significant changes have occurred in child welfare practice guidance for the front-end of Minnesota's child protection system regarding intake, screening and response path protocols. Some of these revisions and/or additions stem from recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children, while others occurred during the 2015 legislative session. This link accesses the revised [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines. \(DHS 5144\)](#)

The guidelines were developed by the department in consultation with members of the Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines Work Group, which included parent leader consultants, county child welfare agency staff from the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators, Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, Minnesota State Court Administrator's Office, Minnesota County Attorney Association, State Public Defender, University of Minnesota – Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, Northpoint Health and Wellness, and mandated reporters, including education/school, pediatrics, domestic violence and alcohol and other drug abuse specialists. Members of the Indian Child Welfare Council, tribal government officials, and urban tribal representatives were also consulted and provided feedback on the guidelines. The purpose of the Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines is to:

- Provide direction for local child welfare agencies
- Promote statewide consistency in definition and practice, and
- Inform the public about types of child safety concerns that should be reported.

Families and communities are best served when child maltreatment screening guidelines are clearly understood and readily available. These guidelines are based on the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act, [Minn. Stat. § 626.556 \(PDF\)](#).

All county and tribal child protection staff must be trained on these revised guidelines by November 1, 2015. The guidelines must be implemented by local child welfare agencies as of January 1, 2016.

Efforts Underway

The Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines will be revised and republished in January 2016 to include guidance on the first 45 days of a child protection services response.

Additionally, the following work groups will be convened during the remainder of 2015 and the first half of 2016 to provide specific recommendations on implementation plans for:

- Addressing sex trafficked youth within a child protection response, including policy, practice protocol and service need recommendations
- Developing protocols and practice for responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect involving domestic violence
- Developing protocols and practice recommendations for responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect involving prenatal exposure
- Reviewing and revising/replacing the Structured Decision Making instruments to assess safety and risk during the first 45 days of a child protection services response.

The department is also working with local child welfare agencies to implement statewide capacity to respond to reports alleging imminent danger to a child on a 24-hour basis. Administrative Rule requires local child welfare agencies to be available on a 24-hour basis to respond to such situations by assuring reports of imminent danger are received, screened, and assigned for an emergency child protection response. This coverage can be an after-hours crisis response, on-call, or some other contracted service. It cannot be delegated solely to law enforcement. Developing the revised guidelines clarifies the existing rule requiring agencies, not law enforcement, to respond. Many local child welfare agencies

need time to develop and implement such capacity, such as having an on-call social worker and supervisor.

Rapid Consultation System – The Minnesota Department of Human Services provides the Rapid Consultation system to assure consultation to county and tribal child welfare agency staff when making decisions regarding the safety of children, especially in challenging situations. To access the dedicated toll-free number specifically for the Rapid Consultation system, social workers, their supervisors and/or screening team members can call 1-888-234-1138 to schedule a time to discuss their question(s) with a team of professionals. Once the request for consultation is received, a consultation will be scheduled for the earliest time a telephone consultation can be coordinated between state and local agency colleagues, but within 24 hours after receiving the initial request. Child protection social workers and their supervisors are encouraged to access Rapid Consultation, as needed, to help guide decision making on challenging case situations.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4670 (voice) or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.