



STATE STATUTES
CURRENT THROUGH FEBRUARY 2021

Cross-Reporting Among Agencies That Respond to Child Abuse and Neglect

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All 50 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statutes specifying procedures that State agencies must follow in handling reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In most States, these procedures include requirements for cross-system reporting and/or information sharing among professional entities. Typically, reports are shared among social services agencies, law enforcement departments, and prosecutors' offices.

In most States, a mandated reporter or other person who is concerned about a child's safety and welfare can make a report of suspected child maltreatment to a reporting hotline, the child protection services (CPS)

agency, or a law enforcement agency. Requiring some or all these agencies to share information (i.e., cross-report) ensures that the appropriate information gets to the agency that must conduct the investigation or family assessment.

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CROSS-REPORTING BETWEEN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Specific models for information sharing vary from State to State. For example, CPS agencies generally have the responsibility of responding to cases in which the suspected abuse or neglect is caused by a parent, family member, or other caregiver. In approximately 30 States, cases in which the suspected maltreatment is caused by someone other than a family member, or in which the maltreatment involves sexual abuse or severe injury to the child, are considered crimes and must be cross-reported to law enforcement agencies for investigation.¹ In eight States, a CPS agency must notify the appropriate law enforcement agency when a report alleges that a child is the victim of human trafficking.²

In 15 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, all reports made initially to a CPS agency must be cross-reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency, and reports made to law enforcement must be cross-reported to CPS.³ In 15 States, when a law enforcement agency receives a report, it is required to notify CPS of the receipt of the report and any actions taken in response.⁴ In 18 States, CPS and law enforcement agencies are required to coordinate investigations and share information in order to minimize

the number of times individual children are interviewed.⁵ Eight States require information sharing among multidisciplinary teams that conduct assessments and provide services to families.⁶ In West Virginia, animal humane workers are required to notify CPS when they observe a child being maltreated, and CPS workers are required to notify the animal humane agency when they observe the maltreatment of an animal.

OTHER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In 10 States, if an agency determines that a child has been abused or neglected by a teacher or other person employed by the school that the child attends, notification of the findings are required to be sent to the following:

- A law enforcement agency (Alabama)
- The school superintendent, principal, headmaster, or executive director of the school (Arkansas, Connecticut, Texas, and Virginia)
- The appropriate licensing or registering authority to the extent necessary to carry out its official responsibilities (Alaska, Arkansas, and Minnesota)
- The State education department (Massachusetts, Nebraska, and New Hampshire)

¹ The word "approximately" is used to stress the fact that States frequently amend their laws. This information is current only through February 2021. The States that require CPS agencies to cross-report specific types of abuse to law enforcement agencies include Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Washington, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

² California, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, and Vermont

³ Arizona, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

⁴ Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Washington

⁵ Connecticut, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming

⁶ Arkansas, Delaware, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Virginia

In 23 States⁷ and Guam, caseworkers are required to determine whether the child alleged to be suffering from abuse or neglect is a member of a military family. If the status of the child as a family member of an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces is confirmed, the department must notify the family advocacy office of the military facility where the child's parent or guardian is based.

In 31 States⁸, caseworkers are required to determine whether a child named in a report has Native American ancestry and whether the child or the child's parent is a member of an Indian Tribe or is eligible for Tribal membership. Once it is known that the child is Native American and the child's Tribal affiliation has been determined, the State agency must notify the child's parents or Tribal custodian and the Tribe of the report and any proceedings related to the report.

This publication is a product of the State Statutes Series prepared by Child Welfare Information Gateway. While every attempt has been made to be as complete as possible, additional information on these topics may be in other sections of a State's code as well as agency regulations, case law, and informal practices and procedures.

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⁷ Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming

⁸ Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming



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