

Montana Department of Justice Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman Meeting the Child: A Systemic Report



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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, OCFO began responding to citizen requests to review and investigate specific CFSD actions or omissions in response to child abuse reports. Between 2014 and 2022, OCFO responded to 2,358 citizen requests and completed a total of 901 case reviews and investigations. During that period, OCFO collected a tremendous amount of data and flagged cases with similarities. As a result, OCFO and its partners have identified statewide trends in the child welfare system.

Meeting the Child: A Systemic Report is an analysis of the Immediate Danger Assessment (IDA) procedure conducted by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Child and Family Services Division (CFSD). An IDA is a tool used by the Child Protection Specialist (CPS) in the field to determine whether a child is at immediate risk of harm by a caregiver. The goal of this report is to provide evidence-based information and guidance to improve Montana's response to vulnerable children. The Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman (OCFO) extends our appreciation to DPHHS and CFSD leadership for their consultation and partnership.

Pursuant to MCA 41-3-1215, the OCFO shall provide oversight of the child protective services provided by the Department to identify and report on trends in the handling of the cases and make recommendations to improve the child protective services system. Systemic investigations review numerous cases to find information about a single specific trend, area of practice, or pattern that affects multiple cases and families in Montana's child welfare system.

What is an Immediate Danger Assessment?

The Child and Family Services Policy Manual (CFSPM) requires an IDA to be completed at each initial contact with a child who has been alleged to be abused or neglected by their caregiver(s).

1. *The CPS must complete an Immediate Danger Assessment(s) on each open report within 24 hours of the initial face-to-face contact with the identified child(ren).*
2. *If the CPS identifies that there is an Immediate Danger to a child or children in the home, whenever possible, the CPS must consult with the Child Protection Specialist Supervisor (CPSS), or higher-level administrator, prior to leaving the situation to assure the Protection Plan fully addresses the safety concerns identified as Immediate Danger(s) to the safety of the child(ren).*
3. *Unless an Immediate Danger is identified the CPS must consult with the CPSS, or higher-level administrator, within twenty-four hours of the first face-to-face contact with all children in the family.*
4. *The CPSS, or higher-level administrator, will document consultations”¹*

Two hundred twenty-two random cases were selected from the CFSD Montana Family Safety Information System (MFSIS) database for this report. Of those, sixty child protection reports that were assigned to the field offices Child Protection Specialists (CPS) for investigations were analyzed for this report. The methodology section on page 4 details the case selection process.

¹ State of Montana, Department of Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division. (2022).

- 5%, or three cases, met criteria for Immediate Danger.
- 95%, or 57 cases, Immediate Danger was not identified.

Case studies of the three cases with danger identified are included in this report. The analysis of the remaining 57 cases is the subject of a future systemic report.

THE ISSUE

The stakeholders to Montana’s child protection system, public policy leaders, and citizens advocacy organizations have contacted OCFO with concerns about children placed out of their homes in Montana. The number of children placed out of their homes by CFSD has reduced, but in 2018 a record number per capita of children were in state care². OCFO is responding to this trend of concern with an analysis of 60 cases for which a CPS conducted an IDA. The goal of the report is to provide evidence-based information about how and when CFSD determines whether a family needs formal support, and a child may need an out of home placement.

SYSTEMIC INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGY

Based upon trainings and consultations with United States Ombudsman Association (USOA), the OCFO adopted protocol and procedures for systemic reviews and reports about Montana’s child protection system. The protocol’s three steps are:

1. Identify the issue.
2. Assess the issue.
3. Develop a timeline for the investigation and report.

Considerations for reporting include questions such as:

- Is this an issue of public interest?
- Will there be value to the recommendations?
- Are there reasonable grounds?
- How many people will the report impact?
- Do the impacted people include vulnerable populations and decision makers?
- Is the issue within OCFO authority?
- Does OCFO have the resources to complete the review?

In order to assess the CFSD’s adherence to the procedures guiding IDAs, OCFO pulled 222 closed reports received by CFSD in a 90-day window in 2022 from within the CFSD MFSIS database.

Reports were sorted by CFSD Region (Figure A1) initially, and then OCFO selected reports from as many counties within a region as were available. A variety of priorities were included (P1, P2 and P3) as well as a variety of *Substantiated* and *Unsubstantiated* reports until there were 10 CPS cases for each of the six regions.

² <https://www.casey.org/media/montana-fact-sheet-2021.pdf>

During the review of all cases, the Intake Assessment Form created by Centralized Intake (CI) was reviewed in MFSIS to find allegations and the identified children, then the report's corresponding Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) was reviewed to examine documentation surrounding the first date of the face-to-face contact between the CPS and the identified child(ren).

This report includes an overview of the procedures for when a report of suspected child abuse is made to Montana's Child Abuse Hotline and assigned to the field for investigation.

What happens when a report of suspected child abuse is made?

Pursuant to MCA § 41-3-201(1), in Montana an individual who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is being abused or neglected, should call the CI hotline at 1 (866) 820-5437 to make a report. CFSD operates a toll-free child abuse hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Centralized Intake Specialists (CIS) are trained to collect detailed information about the concern. The CISs use the information provided to screen calls, assess the level of risk to children, assign the type of maltreatment alleged and prioritize reports according to the urgency with which a CPS needs to respond.

According to MCA 41-3-102, child maltreatment is defined as:

1. Actual physical or psychological harm to a child
2. Substantial risk of physical or psychological harm to a child
3. Abandonment

The specific type of maltreatments include:

- Physical abuse / Physical neglect / Psychological abuse or neglect / Sexual abuse

The CIS sends all reports of suspected child maltreatment to the proper field office for investigation. CFSD has field offices across the state, broken into six regions (See appendix for [map](#)). Once a report is received by the field office, the CPS must make face-to-face contact with the identified child(ren) within the timeframes assigned.

- The timeline of a case begins when the CIS enters the report and sends it to the field, not when the CPS first sees it on their caseload.

In June 2022, the Office of Child and Family Ombudsman (OCFO) investigated the timeliness of CPS responses to reports designated P2, requiring CFSD to see the child face-to-face within 72 hours, as well as the barriers identified by the field when the timelines are missed. [The First Knock at the Door](#) provides the outcome of that investigation.

How will CFSD know if a child is at risk for abuse or neglect?

CFSD uses *The Montana Safety Assessment and Management System* (SAMS) to ensure that ongoing safety assessments guide the CPS's decision making throughout the life of the case. The Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) is the primary tool. The scope of the assessment is identifying safety threats, immediate and/or impending, and working with families to mitigate those threats. Children are considered "safe" when there is no immediate danger or impending danger threats, or the caregivers' protective capacities control existing threats. To make this determination, the CPS must complete an IDA (CFS-SAMS-501) on each open report within 24

hours of the first face-to-face contact with the identified child(ren). CPS have a *SAMS Field Guide*, which defines the Immediate Danger Threats and Safety Threshold Criteria.

The IDA form also has guidance and requires a signature of the CPSS (Figure A3 and A4). The main function of the IDA is to determine whether the identified child(ren) need immediate protection from serious harm.

Immediate Danger(s) is/are Immediate, Significant and Clearly Observable family conditions or threats to child safety that are actively occurring or "in process" of occurring and will likely result in severe (serious) harm to a child. (CFS-SAMS-501).

The IDA includes 27 "Immediate Danger Threats" which are specific behaviors or conditions that are associated with a child being in immediate danger of serious harm. Not all safety threats included on the IDA are stand-alone threats that point to Immediate Danger, but combined with others increases the risk to a child. See Figures A3 and A4 for an example form of an IDA. The determination of whether a child is in Immediate Danger of serious harm is based upon credible information available at the time of the assessment.

When Immediate Danger is identified then what are the options for CFSD to engage the family and improve child safety?

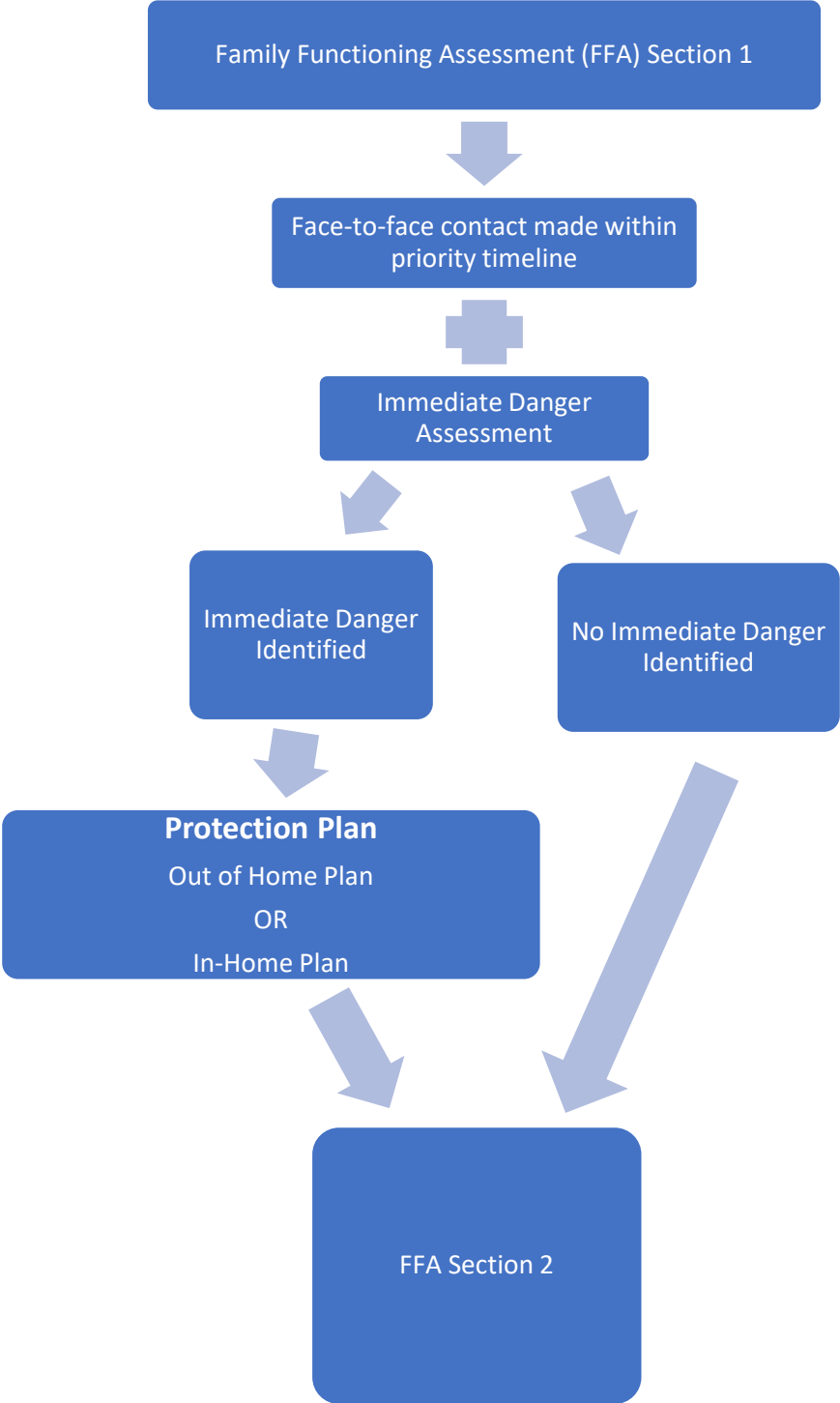
When Immediate Danger has been identified with a family the CPS must implement a Protection Plan. Below is a chart that outlines the components of a Protection Plan.

PROTECTION PLAN
WHEN: When Immediate Danger is Identified
WHY: To Control Safety
WHAT: Immediate Risk of Harm
PURPOSE: To Complete the FFA and Investigation
EFFECT: Short term (30 days if the child is out of the home or 60 days if the child is kept in the home)

(Field Guide 8/2015)

Once Immediate Danger has been identified, either an *In-Home* or *Out-of-Home Protection Plan* may be offered to the family. The type of Protection Plan may be dependent on several factors including the type of alleged abuse/neglect, caregiver protective capabilities and/or characteristics of the child. An *In-Home Protection Plan* (IHPP) may last up to 60 days and an *Out-of-Home Protection Plan* (OHPP) may last up to 30 days. If there is a Protection Plan in place at conclusion of the FFA, it must then be replaced by a Safety Plan. The FFA is utilized throughout the investigation to determine the safety of the children. There are multiple components to the FFA, and this report only focuses on the beginning stages of the FFA. Below is a simplified flowchart to demonstrate the first few steps on how CFSD opens an investigation, assesses safety, and begins the FFA.

Process to identify Immediate Danger:



OUTCOME:

Immediate Danger was not found in 57 of the 60 cases reviewed. These cases were subsequently closed and unsubstantiated. OCFO has provided the three case studies where CFSD found immediate danger to be present.

CASE STUDIES

OCFO recognizes the importance of providing narrative samples detailing the efforts that CFSD took to keep children safe and family's strong once Immediate Danger was found. The three cases below highlight the different efforts that occurred when the IDA resulted in Immediate Danger for the child with their caregivers. All identifying information related to the cases has been removed to ensure confidentiality.

CASE STUDY #1:

On day one, a report of suspected abuse or neglect was made regarding a family. The assigned CPS had initial contact with two of four identified children and completed an IDA in a timely manner. Immediate Danger was documented and generated a level of immediate response. Six of the twenty-seven Immediate Danger criteria were selected on the IDA form, including:

- The family had a history of reports.
- The children were unable to protect self.
- The parents were described as acting dangerously.
- The parents were described as out of control.
- Domestic violence occurring.
- The family was in a situation that will/may change quickly.

The CPS's actions in response to the Immediate Danger:

- Staffing with CPSS occurred per procedure.
- At the time of initial safety assessment, CFSD was able to create an *Out-of-Home Safety Plan (OHSP)* with the parent(s) leading to the initial protection plan being "noncustodial parent or kin placement."
- Children were placed with kin.

An In-Home Safety Plan (IHSP) established with parent(s) where the children were placed back in the home that lasted from day 23 to day 113.

There was a 30-day extension of the IHSP established with parent(s) that went from day 93 to day 124.

The case determination occurred on day 141 when the FFA was closed, and the allegations of Physical Neglect were *Founded*.

The case outcome at the time of OCFO's review was that the case was closed with the family reunited and no legal intervention needed for the family.

Analysis:

During the OHSP, one caregiver was able to provide safety for the children to return home under an IHSP. Both caregivers attended mental health therapy and parenting classes, while the children also received mental health therapy. One of the caregivers also participated in a chemical dependency evaluation, outpatient chemical dependency classes and random drug testing. The caregivers voluntarily agreed to extend the IHSP to continue therapy. There were also natural support systems with the family that became designated safety resources.

CASE STUDY #2:

On day one, a report of suspected abuse or neglect was made regarding a family to the child abuse hotline. The report was categorized as a Priority *Three*.

On day nine CPS had initial contact with the identified child and completed an Immediate Danger Assessment (IDA) in a timely manner. Immediate Danger was documented and generated a level of immediate response. The Immediate Dangers in this case included:

- Accessible to the maltreater.
- Parents were unable or unwilling to perform parental duties.

The CPS's response following the finding of immediate danger:

- Staffing with CPSS occurred per procedure.
- At the time of initial assessment CFSD was not able to create an *In-Home Safety Plan* with the parent(s) leading to the initial protection plan being Emergency Protective Services (EPS) and *Notification to Parent* (CFSD-011)(See Figure A2).
- Child was placed in licensed foster care.

On day 15, an Emergency Protective Services Hearing was held on Petition for EPS, Adjudication of Child as a Youth in Need of Care (YINC), and Temporary Legal Custody (TLC).

- EPS was ordered by a judge on day 15.
- The Show Cause hearing was set for day 40 but rescheduled to day 62.

On day 30, a combination In Home/Out of Home Plan was established with parent and kin.

The case determination was the FFA is closed, and the allegations of Physical Neglect were *Founded* on day 56.

The Show Cause hearing was held on day 62 for Petition for Emergency Protective Services, Adjudication of Child as a YINC and TLC.

YINC and TLC were ordered by the judge on day 98.

On day 110, a trial home visit was started with a parent. The case outcome at time of OCFO's review was that the case was open with CFSD retaining TLC and the child being monitored in the trial home visit with their parent. The trial home visit is still in place.

Analysis:

During the implementation of the IHSP/OHSP, a caregiver was able to maintain safety in the home. The child in this case met the criteria for the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which meant the standard for CFSD to work with the family was higher. The caregivers participated in in-patient chemical dependency, mental health therapy, home visiting services and parenting classes. The caregivers were also provided with bus passes and housing vouchers. The child received occupational, speech and mental health therapy.

CASE STUDY #3:

On day one, a report of suspected abuse or neglect was made regarding a family. CPS had initial contact with the identified child and completed an IDA in a timely manner. Immediate Danger was documented and generated a level of immediate response. The Immediate Danger factors include:

- A history of reports.
- The child is 0-6 in age.
- The parents were described or are acting dangerously.
- The parents are unable or unwilling to perform parental duties.

The CPS's response was:

- Staffing with CPSS occurred per procedure.
- At the time of initial assessment CFSD was not able to create an IHSP with the parent(s) leading to the initial protection plan being Emergency Protective Services (EPS) and *Notification to Parent* (CFSD-011).
- Child was placed in licensed foster care.

On day 12, an Emergency Protective Services (EPS) Hearing was held on Petition for Emergency Protective Services.

- EPS was ordered by the judge on day 12.

On day 32, the Show Cause hearing was held on Petition for Emergency Protective Services, Adjudication of Child as a Youth in Need of Care, and Temporary Legal Custody.

- There was a continuation of EPS ordered by the judge on day 33.

The case determination occurred on day 48 when the FFA was closed, and the allegations of Physical Neglect were *Founded*.

On day 88, a hearing was held for adjudication and disposition. The judge subsequently ordered adjudication and disposition on day 94.

Treatment plans were ordered by the judge on day 130.

Analysis:

The caregivers in this case have not shown up for court hearings or other pertinent appointments. They have not participated in court order treatment plans or any other relevant services. CFSD

has filed for Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). The child is now placed in an out-of-state kinship home.

Summary:

In two of the three cases where Immediate Danger was found, the family unit was reunited and were able to ensure safety for their children. Throughout case notes and court documents, both families were offered high quality services that targeted their needs and reason for CFSD involvement as well as high levels of family engagement from CFSD staff. It appeared that families were more likely to succeed with support from service providers and CFSD. The case where the family is still on a trial home visit is the choice of the parents, as they feel they need a high level of support to maintain their children in their home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: OCFO recommends that CFSD continue to use Family Engagement Meetings (FEM), community service providers and natural supports to assist families in the reunification process. It is recommended that they continue to offer FEMs throughout the life of the case to assess safety, safety resources, case plans, and safety plans.

Rationale #1: Parents, children, natural supports and community providers are valued as partners in determining solutions and making decisions. The desired outcome of this recommendation is that all necessary parties are convened to reach the goals of assessment, monitoring, formulating, and coordinating services and supports for the family. The Office of Faith and Community Based Services at DPHHS may also help to serve and support children and families, as a way of utilizing natural supports in their community.

Recommendation #2: *CFSD Case Management Procedure* highlights communication topics and standards for interactions between CFSD staff and families. OCFO recommends that CFSD direct staff to ensure that parents are given opportunities and support to mitigate the safety concerns that led to CFSD involvement.

Rationale #2: The parents and families are encouraged to engage in the development and implementation of their case plan by identifying services to support and enhance their protective capacities. Partnering with parents in all aspects of their case plan is critical to successful reunification of the child with their parent. A key tool to engaging parents is the use of quality ongoing face-to-face contact between the CPS and the parent to engage them in effective case review and planning. The CPS and parent face-to-face contacts provide opportunities to address the effectiveness and/or barriers of services in place to support prompt reunification. Empowerment of parents in this manner helps to protect and preserve their rights as parents.

CONCLUSION

While OCFO recognizes the importance of providing recommendations for DPHHS, this report will be continued, and additional recommendations in the next report will encompass the entire data analysis from the 60 IDAs. That report will provide details on how practice operates in the

field while the second part of the report will share case level insights on how CFSD’s procedures are adhered to or not.

APPENDIX

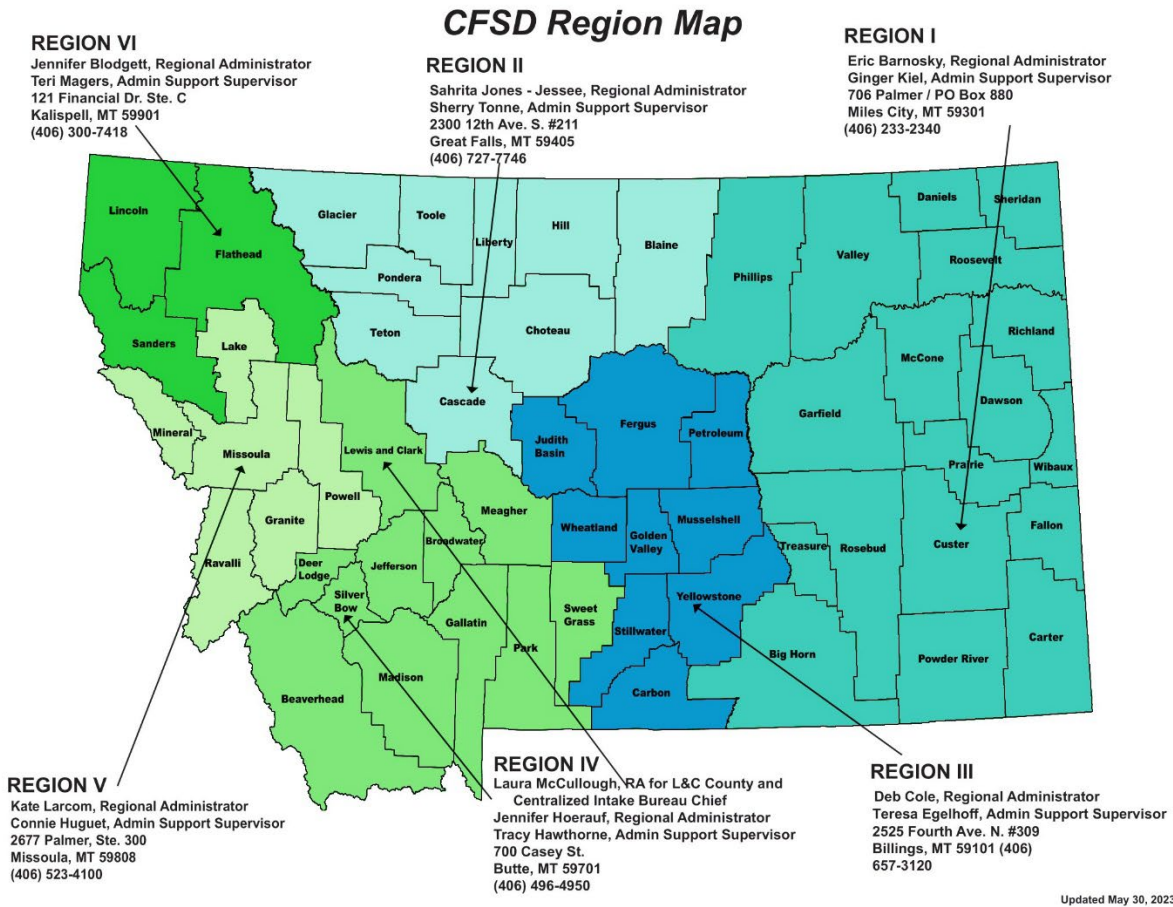


Figure A1: The Montana Child and Family Services Division’s geographic regions.



Department of Public Health and Human Services

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Greg Gianforte, Governor

Charles T. Brereton, Director

DPHHS-CFS-011
Rev. 06/21

NOTIFICATION TO PARENT

If you are the parent having physical custody of your child(ren) you may have a support person present during any in-person meeting with the child protection specialist concerning emergency protective services.

TO: DATE:

FROM: , Child Protection Specialist PHONE #:

Child Protection Specialist Supervisor: PHONE #:

Name(s) of Child(ren): 1. 2.
3. 4.

REASONS FOR REMOVAL:

On this date, after receiving a report of suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment, the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) investigated the circumstances of the report. CFSD determined that the above-named child(ren) is (are) at risk of child abuse or neglect or is (are) being abused or neglected. After making this determination, CFSD removed your child(ren) from your home and placed him/her/them in emergency foster care. The reason(s) CFSD removed your child(ren) are:

If you would like an Emergency Protective Services Hearing within 5 business days, please contact:

Office of Public Defender at 1-888-241-8657

Show Cause Hearing will be scheduled within 20 days of removal of your child(ren).

Purpose of Hearings:

The District Court Judge is required to hold a Show Cause Hearing and if requested an Emergency Protective Services Hearing if your child(ren) is (are) removed from your home for longer than 5 working days. At these hearings, the Child Protection Specialist and you can provide statements to the Judge. The Child Protection Specialist will explain the reasons that your child(ren) was (were) removed from your home and placed in emergency foster care. You will have the opportunity to tell the Judge why you believe CFSD should not have removed your child(ren). The Judge must consider all the information that you and the Child Protection Specialist present, as well as the statements you make during the hearing.

At the end of the Hearing, the Judge will make two decisions:

- 1) Whether the Child and Family Services Division should have removed your child(ren) from your home; and
- 2) Whether your child(ren) should remain in temporary foster care.

If the Judge decides that your child(ren) should remain in foster care, the CFSD Child Protection Specialist will work with you to develop a treatment plan. The treatment plan will outline the steps you will need to take for your children to be returned to you.

- You have a right to receive a copy of the affidavit regarding the reasons for removal.
- You may request that the child(ren) be placed with a relative, including fictive kin.

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, political ideas, sex, age, marital status, physical or mental disability, or national origin. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination, contact the DPHHS Human Resources Division at (406) 444-3136 or the Montana Human Rights Bureau at 1-(800)-542-0807, or relay service at 711.

Figure A2: The Notification to Parent Form.

Supervisory Consultation after first contact with the child(ren):

Supervisory consultation must be completed within 24 hours of the first face-to-face contact with all children in the family.

CPSS Name and Date of consultation (if completed by phone):

_____ Date _____

Information deemed sufficient; no Immediate Danger(s) identified.

Supervisory notes regarding consultation: (optional)

Supervisory Approval of the *written* Immediate Danger Assessment:

Child Protection Specialist Supervisor _____ Date _____
Signature

GLOSSARY

41-3-102, MCA

41-3-1215, MCA

41-3-201, MCA

AI

CFSD

CFSPM

CI

CIS

CPS

CPSS

DPHHS

Emergency Protective Services Hearing

EPS

FEM

[Montana Code Annotated: Title 41. Chapter 3. Part 1.](#)

[Montana Code Annotated: Title 41. Chapter 3. Part 12. Section 15](#)

[Montana Code Annotated: Title 41. Chapter 3. Part 2. Section 1.](#)

Additional Information: Additional Information to a case or report.

Child and Family Services Division: The division within the Department of Public Health and Human Services responsible and accountable for all child abuse and neglect investigations in Montana where the alleged perpetrator is a parent or other person responsible for a child's welfare under Montana law and for managing all open child welfare cases in Montana. CFSD does not investigate all reports on tribal lands.

Child and Family Services Policy Manual.

Centralized Intake: Where all calls to the Montana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline are received. 1(866)820-5437.

Centralized Intake Specialist: A person who answers the calls to the Montana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and assigns the level of the child protection report.

Child Protection Specialist: The caseworker for a child or family involved in the Child Protection System.

Child Protection Specialist Supervisor: The supervisor of a Child Protection Specialist Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

A formal proceeding before a court of law where a petition for Emergency Protective Services is presented.

Emergency Protective Services: Services provided to a child and family when the Child Protection Specialist determines, based upon a thorough investigation, that the child cannot safely remain in the home without the provision of the service (out-of-home placement).

Family Engagement Meetings: A creative tool used by Child Protection Specialists to empower families in formulating a plan of treatment to provide a safe protective environment for their children where issues of abuse/neglect have come to the attention of the

	CFSD. The goals and purpose for holding a FEM meeting should change and be adapted to meet the needs of each family.
FFA	Family Functioning Assessment: A form that Child Protection Specialist use to determine safety and risk factors for a child(ren) during an investigation and as part of an ongoing child welfare case.
FND	Founded: After the investigation, the Child Protection Specialist has determined that there is probable cause to believe that an act of child abuse or neglect occurred.
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act: A federal law that recognizes that Indian tribes have sovereign rights and legal powers with respect to Indian children and, as government, have a vital legal role to play in determining whether Indian children should be separated from their families and culture.
IDA	Immediate Danger Assessment: A form used by a Child Protection Specialist that assesses the immediate danger of a child who is the subject of a report to CI.
IHPP	In-Home Protection Plan: A type of Protection Plan that may last up to 60 days but can be extended if needed.
IHSP	In-Home Safety Plan: A plan that refers to safety management so that safety services, actions and response assure a child can be kept safe. The plan is during the Trial Home Visit and is reviewed monthly.
Immediate Danger Threats	Immediate Danger or Immediate Danger Threats refers to safety threats that are actively occurring or in process of occurring and will likely result in actual or substantial risk of physical or psychological harm to a child and requiring protective action. They must be immediate, significant, and clearly observable.
Intake Assessment Form	A form that a Centralized Intake Specialist uses when speaking to a caller to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline to assess the level of risk and any pertinent information.
MCA	Montana Code Annotated: The compilation of the Montana State Constitution and all other state laws.
MFSIS	Montana Family Safety Information System: A statewide database with access to reports and cases made to Child Protection Services.
Notification to Parent	A document that notifies a parent as soon as a child is removed and includes the reason for removal,

	information on and purpose of a show cause hearing, and an offer for a support person.
OCFO	Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman.
OHPP	Out-of-Home Protection Plan: A type of Protection Plan that may last up to 30 days but can be extended if needed.
OHSP	Out-of-Home Safety Plan: A plan that refers to safety management that primarily depends on separation of a child from their home. This plan is reviewed monthly and stays in place until the child is placed back in the home of the parent(s).
P1	Priority One: Any report assessed by CI which indicates a child may be in immediate danger of serious harm and must be investigated and assessed immediately. Immediately means upon receipt of the report, not to exceed 24 hours.
P2	Priority Two: Any report assessed by CI which indicates that a child may not be in immediate danger or is temporarily safe but indicates that the presence of an impending state of danger may exist and/or circumstances of the report, such as evidence, will require a timelier response and the investigation and assessment must be initiated within 72 hours.
P3	Priority Three: Any report assessed by CI which indicates there is a less urgent nature about a child's safety and the initiation of a thorough investigation cannot exceed 10 days.
P4	Priority Four: Any report assessed by CI which meets the MCA definition of child maltreatment but fails to meet any immediate or impending danger threats as identified in the SAMS model.
PHA	Physical abuse: An intentional act, an intentional omission, or gross negligence resulting in substantial skin bruising, internal bleeding, substantial injury to skin, subdural hematoma, burns, bone fractures, extreme pain, permanent or temporary disfigurement, impairment of any bodily organ or function, or death.
PHN	Physical neglect: A failure to provide basic necessities, including but not limited to appropriate and adequate nutrition, protective shelter from the elements, and appropriate clothing relating to weather conditions, or failure to provide cleanliness and general supervision, or both, or exposing or allowing the child to be exposed to an unreasonable physical or psychological risk to the child.

Protection Plan	An immediate - same day, short term, and sufficient protective action from identified safety threats in order to allow completion of the initial assessment.
PSA	Psychological abuse or neglect: Severe maltreatment through acts or omissions that are injurious to a child's emotional, intellectual, or psychological capacity to function, including the commission of acts of violence against another person residing in the child's home.
RA Safety Plan	CFSD Regional Administrator. A written arrangement between caregivers and Child Protection Specialists that establishes how impending danger threats will be managed.
Safety Threshold	A reference to the point at which a negative condition goes beyond being concerning and becomes dangerous to a child's safety.
SAI	Sexual Abuse by person responsible for the welfare of a child: Commission of sexual assault, sexual intercourse without consent, aggravated sexual intercourse without consent, indecent exposure, sexual abuse, ritual abuse of a minor, or incest. 41-3-102(20), (21), (30)(a), MCA.
SAMS	The Montana Safety Assessment and Management System.
Show Cause Hearing	The hearing legally required to be held within 20 days, excluding weekends and holidays, of the filing of an initial child abuse and neglect petition.
SUB	Substantiation or Substantiated: Following an investigation, the investigating worker has determined by a preponderance of the evidence that the reported act of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurred, and that the perpetrator of the abuse, neglect, or exploitation may pose a danger to children.
TIA	Temporary Investigative Authority: Judicial authority to conduct an intensive investigation into suspected child abuse and neglect under which the court grants specified relief.
TLC	Temporary Legal Custody: The legal status created by an order of the court that gives a person or agency the right and responsibility for the care, custody and control of a child on a temporary basis.
TPR	Termination of Parental Rights: The legal rights of legal parents are terminated by a court of competent jurisdiction.
UNS	Unsubstantiated: Following the investigation, the Child Protection Specialist was unable to determine

USOA
YINC

by a preponderance of the evidence that the reported abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation occurred.

United States Ombudsman Association.

Youth in Need of Care: A youth who has been adjudicated or determined, after a hearing, to be abused, neglected, or abandoned by the act or omission of a person responsible for the child's welfare in a residential setting.