	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

## I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is in the policy of the Department of Children and Family Services to provide procedures to Child Welfare staff **\* regarding** reports received of suspected child abuse and/or neglect to ensure the child's safety is assessed.

## II. PROCEDURES

When an intake disposition is approved, the intake is automatically routed through ACESS to the local office queue for further review and action. Intakes may also require action by either Centralized Intake staff or local office staff.

Centralized Intake staff are responsible for all intake decision making, including determining the Response Priority, Risk Level and Case Disposition. The Centralized Intake decisions cannot be modified by the local office, but a local office Manager, or the Regional CPS Consultant, may request the review of the intake disposition if they have reasonable concerns or can provide additional information that may change the case information or decision. Detailed information regarding procedures for requesting modifications to Centralized Intake decisions are outlined in DCFS Policy 4-2010 E.-Corrections of a Closed ACESS Intake Case. The following procedure is used for correction/modification of an Intake Case:


- The Manager, or Regional CPS Consultant, assigned to the parish queue will make the written request for modifications via an e-mail to the Centralized Inquiry mail box at DCFS.CentralizedIntakeInquiries@LA.GOV. The written submission should include the applicable intake number along with a brief explanation of the change request and be submitted within the Response Priority timeframe, but no later than within 5 calendar days from the date the report date.
- The assigned Centralized Intake Manager will respond via e-mail of the decision to either modify the case as requested, or not. The mailbox is monitored by Centralized Intake management 24/7 and a response indicating the decision will be provided within 24 hours of the email being received.

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## A. TRANSMITTAL OF REPORTS TO LOCAL OFFICES

### 1. Intake Cases Accepted as a Report of Child Abuse/Neglect

All intake cases accepted as a report of child abuse/neglect are transmitted through the local office ACESS work queue to the local office responsible for the department response. Reports received after hours requiring **\* an immediate \*\*** initiation of the investigation **\*\*\***, are also **\* verbally communicated \*\*** to the local office on-call supervisor.

	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

## 2. Not Accepted/Additional Information Intake Cases

Not Accepted/Additional Information Reports are transmitted to the local office work queue and the local office is responsible for forwarding the report to the assigned worker's supervisor who is then responsible to forward the report to the worker. \* The local office is also responsible for ensuring that new allegations indicated in the Additional Information report are added to the ACESS Investigation case and appropriate action. \*\*

## 3. Not Accepted Reports on Active Cases

All non-accepted reports are forwarded to the local office ACESS work queue. If there is a current open case this will be indicated on the decision page in ACESS. The local office supervisor will be responsible for providing the intake report to the worker's supervisor \*\*\* for review \* and appropriate action.

## 4. Other Not Accepted Reports

The Not Accepted Reports not addressed above are submitted to the local office CPS queue for review by the CPS supervisor and Child Welfare Manager.

# B. LOCAL OFFICE INTAKE ACTIONS POST REPORT ACCEPTANCE

## 1. Assignment to Local Office Worker

The local office supervisor or regional designee \*\* assigned to the ACESS queue is responsible for assigning \*\*\* investigations in the intake queue to a worker by the local office close of business, \* or sooner if needed. An exception is a report involving a DCFS employee. Refer to the assignment procedure below for a report involving an employee.

When the local office assigns the investigation, the \*\* ACESS intake is modified with the assigned worker and supervisor on the homepage. It is then forwarded to the worker and supervisor.


\*\*\*

The following are applicable to the assignment of investigations:

### a. Active \*\*\* Cases

\* If \*\* the family is an active FS \*\*\* case and the report involves one or both of the following Level 3 allegations, the investigation is assigned to the current FS \*\*\* worker:

- Clothing Inadequate
- Shelter Inadequate

 Department of <b>Children &amp;  Family Services</b> <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

CPS staff investigate all other reports with Level three allegations as well as all Level one and two allegations for active FS \*\*\* cases.

## **b. Child Fatality and Life Threatening Injuries**

The local office supervisor assigned to the ACESS queue will be contacted regarding child fatalities and life threatening injuries and the contact will be documented in ACESS.

When a child in a family previously or currently investigated dies or is expected to die from a subsequent incident of abuse/neglect, a different worker shall be assigned to conduct the fatality investigation. The assigned fatality investigative worker will complete the existing investigation.

If a child dies as a result of a previously reported life-threatening injury, the assigned worker shall make a new report of the child's death to the Centralized Intake hotline. If the child dies within 30 days of the initial report of the life threatening injury, the report will be non-accepted/additional information. The death allegation will be added to the open investigation. If the child dies after 30 days of the initial report, the assigned worker shall make a report to Centralized Intake hotline, a new investigation case will be opened.

## **c. Near Fatalities and Life Threatening Injuries Intake Cases**


Reports of child abuse/neglect near fatalities and life threatening injuries are assigned \* as priority investigations. They are conducted in accordance with CW Policy Part 15, Investigation of Child Fatalities in Which Child Abuse and/or Neglect is Suspected or Alleged, \*\* whenever the children's injuries are reported to be life threatening.

## **2. Confidential/High Profile Intake Cases Case**

Certain reports should be classified as a confidential case to preserve the privacy of persons who may be known by staff. The identification of a confidential intake case is the responsibility of a Centralized Intake Manager. The Centralized Intake Manager coordinates case assignment and notification of confidential cases with the Area Director of the office responsible for the investigation. The local office Area Director is responsible for ensuring that the corresponding investigation case is marked confidential in the system. \*\*

\*\*\* \* Marking a case as confidential in the system allows only the assigned worker, and their chain of command, \*\* \*\*\* to view the ACESS case.

## **a. Child Abuse and/or Neglect Intake Cases Involving DCFS Employees**

 Department of <b>Children &amp;            Family Services</b> <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

Reports involving a DCFS employee, whether or not the employee is the alleged perpetrator, shall be entered into ACESS as a confidential intake by **\* Centralized Intake Managers. \*\* \*\*\*** It is immediately referred to the Area Director by the **\* Intake Manager. \*\* \*\*\*** The AD, or designee, is responsible for notifying the **\* Regional Administrator and Child Welfare Field Director \*\* \*\*\*** of a report involving a DCFS employee.

The **\* Area Director, in consultation with the CW Field Director and Regional, \*\* \*\*\*** will decide the appropriate parish and worker to whom the investigation will be assigned. The assignment is to ensure, to the extent possible, the confidentiality of the employee's situation.

If the report is received after working hours, on holidays or on a weekend, discretion regarding the assignment is to be used if the investigation must be initiated with a Priority 1 or Priority 2 response. On the first working day following the receipt of the report, the AD is notified of the report and the status of the investigation. The AD will then notify the **\* Regional Administrator and CW Field Director \*\* \*\*\***.

#### **b. High Profile Intake Cases**

These involve persons who are:

- Well known in the community;
- **\* CW Stakeholders that DCFS frequently work with (Law Enforcement, CAC, Attorneys, etc.) \*\***
- May be well known by DCFS local office staff; and,
- Family members of DCFS staff

### **C. CENTRALIZED INTAKE NOTIFICATIONS**


#### **1. Centralized Intake Supervisor Notifications**

The centralized Intake supervisor shall immediately notify State Office Management Staff of the following reports: **\*\*\***

- Child Fatality/Life Threatening Injuries
- High Profile **\* cases**
- Current or Potential Media Attention **reports**
- Abandoned Infant or Safe Haven **Relinquishments \*\***

**\*\*\***

The Centralized Intake supervisor should immediately notify the local office intake supervisor by e-mail/telephone with the information contained in the CPS Intake Case. The Centralized

	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

Intake supervisor submits a Summary of pertinent information by e-mail to the \* designated email distribution group. \*\* \*\*\*

## 2. Reporter

All reporters shall be notified \* through an ACCESS generated notification \*\* \*\*\* of the intake decision regarding their report, unless they have chosen to remain anonymous or request that a notice not be sent to them. \* This notification is generated when the intake is approved by a Centralized intake supervisor.

The [Form 480](#), Notice to a Reporter, is used as the written notification unless the report was not accepted due to prioritization. If a report is not accepted due to prioritization, [Form 482](#) is manually sent \*\* \*\*\*

## 3. \* Other State Office Notifications \*\* \*\*\*

The Centralized Intake supervisor is responsible to transmit a copy of the ACCESS generated Intake Summary Report to \* the CW Liaison Unit, CW Assistant Secretary, the CW Deputy Assistant Secretaries, the CW Directors, the respective Regional Administrator, and the State Office Foster Care Unit for the following reports:

- Death of a foster child
- Serious injury of foster child
- Criminal charges filed against certified/noncertified foster parent


## 4. Licensing Entity Notifications

Centralized Intake staff is responsible for sending all intake summaries involving a residential facility, registered family child care home, or early learning center to the respective state licensing entity. This includes the generated Intake Summary Report for both accepted and not accepted reports.

## D. LOCAL OFFICE NOTIFICATIONS

### 1. Law enforcement

Local office staff are responsible to send a copy of the ACCESS generated Intake Summary Report via fax, or per local law enforcement agreement, to the appropriate law enforcement agency for reports to be sent to law enforcement. Reports involving \*\* \*\*\* juvenile sex trafficking \* will be sent by Centralized Intake staff directly to State Police. State Police will route reports of juvenile sex trafficking to respective law enforcement agency. \*\* \*\*\*

 Department of <b>Children &amp;            Family Services</b> <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

\* In addition to intakes dispositioned as “Refer to Law Enforcement”, other intakes that meet the criteria for a referral to Law Enforcement must be sent by the local office to the respective Law Enforcement agency. If the intake is unrelated to juvenile sex trafficking, the Intake Summary Report is sent to the local law investigation unit no later than the end of each working day, per regional procedures. The Area Director is responsible for ensuring there are procedures in place for sending intake summaries to Law Enforcement, including documentation of this activity. Referrals to Law Enforcement are to be documented in the Notes section of the ACCESS Intake case. Documentation is to include \*\* \*\*\* the date, how the referral was sent (fax, email, etc.), and what local law investigation unit the referral was sent to. The name of the reporter may be released as a person who may have pertinent information; however, they **shall not** be identified as the reporter.

**a. Not Accepted Caretaker**

This category includes intake cases not accepted because the Caretaker and/or perpetrator do not meet the legal criteria of a report for which DCFS is responsible to respond. The information that DCFS will not be responding is included in the notification.

**b. Animal Abuse/Neglect**


Louisiana [R.S. 14:403.6](#) mandates that any employee of government who in his professional capacity routinely investigates alleged abuse, neglect or sexual abuse of a child who becomes aware of evidence of neglect or abuse of an animal (also called cruelty to animals) shall report the incident to the law enforcement or the animal welfare authority in which the incident occurred.

Reports including information regarding possible abuse/neglect of an animal are to be reported \* by local office staff, \*\* either to a local law enforcement agency or the local animal welfare agency as per local working agreements.

**c. Abandoned Infants and Safe Haven Relinquishments**

Unless they were the reporter, all reports of abandoned newborns/infants are reported to law enforcement. This includes infants relinquished with an individual at a designated emergency care facility as per Louisiana Children’s Code, Title XI, Chapter 13, Safe Haven Relinquishments, as well as those abandoned without a provision for care.

The law enforcement agency shall be requested to check reports and listings of missing infants and notify the local DCFS Child Welfare office responsible for the investigation whether or not the abandoned/relinquished infant may have been reported as missing.

	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

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## 2. Regional Administrator with Child Fatalities, Life Threatening Injuries and Media Attention

The Regional Administrator \* or their designee, is responsible for investigative notifications and updates in accordance with CPS Policy 4-1500.

Once medical confirmation is received verifying that the child's death was due to abuse or neglect, notification is required to State Office at [\\_DCFS-CPI-4Reports@LA.GOV](mailto:_DCFS-CPI-4Reports@LA.GOV). This notification is to include a copy of the diagnosis, autopsy finding, etc. This notification is necessary, as the law requires notification to the Ombudsman once abuse or neglect is determined.

When it is known after the receipt of the report by the local office that a report has or will attract media attention, the Regional Administrator or their designee, is responsible for completing and forwarding a [DCFS Media Crisis Information Sheet](#) as per Policy [1-17](#), DCFS Media Relations. \*\*


The worker assigned to the investigation is responsible for immediately notifying the worker and supervisor by telephone/e-mail of any report received on an active case. This includes reports in all settings.

## 4. Reports in Foster Homes

### a. Foster Child Placed In Home

When a foster child is an alleged victim of abuse/neglect by a foster parent and/or an alleged victim is a child in the custody of the foster parents, notification of involved parties is required. The following are notified immediately, or no later than the next working day if after hours, \*\* by the worker/supervisor assigned to the investigation:

- Home Development Supervisor and Manager for DCFS certified homes;
- The assigned FC Worker, Supervisor, and Manager for all children placed in the foster caregivers' home, and all alleged victims;
- Regional Placement Specialist for private agency homes;
- The Area Director and Regional Administrator for the region in which the foster home is located. \*\*

	<b>Division/Section</b>	Child Welfare
	<b>Chapter No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services (CPS)
	<b>Part No./Name</b>	4 – Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Section No./Name</b>	Child Protective Services Intake
	<b>Document No./Name</b>	4-420 Intake Actions and Notifications
	<b>Effective Date</b>	July 15, 2024

#### b. Reports without Foster Child Victim

The following shall be notified of an abuse/neglect report involving a biological, adopted or other child in the custody of and/or living with a foster parent and there are no allegations involving foster/adoptive children:

- Foster Care/Adoption worker or supervisor
- Home Development worker or supervisor with a DCFS certified foster parent
- Regional Placement Specialist for private agency home

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#### 4. Reports in Restrictive Care Facilities

The worker/supervisor shall notify the Regional Placement Specialist for all reports of abuse/neglect. The Regional Placement Specialist is then responsible for notifying:

- Facility Liaison worker as soon as possible.
- State Office Residential and Private Foster Care Section

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#### G. Request from Law Enforcement for Reporter information

The name of the reporter may be released as a person who may have pertinent information; however, they **shall not** be identified as the reporter. Refer to Policy [1-515 D.](#), **\* Law Enforcement, Military Authorities, Prosecuting Authorities, and Coroners** for more details regarding releasing information to Law Enforcement.

### III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

[DCFS Media Crisis Information Sheet](#)  
[Form 480 / Instructions](#) Notice to Reporter  
[CPI-4 Form / Instructions](#) Initial Child Fatality Report \*\*

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### IV. REFERENCES

[R.S. 14:403.6](#) \* Reporting of Neglect or Abuse of Animals  
[LAC, Title 67, Part V, Subpart 3, Chapter 15, Section 1505, Safe Haven Relinquishment](#)  
[La Children's Code Article 1154](#), **Safe Haven Continued Custody Hearing; Instant Order \*\***