



CHILD WELFARE SERVICES ASSESSMENT

A Parent's Guide

Nevada County Health & Human Services Agency
Department of Social Services - Child Welfare Services Division
988 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949

Child Welfare Services is a 24 hour service for children in Nevada County who are newborn to age 18 and possible victims of child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Nevada County Child Welfare Services is responsible for:

- Preventing, correcting, or helping with problems, which may cause the neglect, abuse or exploitation of children
- Preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by finding out about family problems, helping families in resolving their problems and preventing the breakup of the family
- Reuniting children with their families after they have been removed due to child abuse or neglect
- Making sure children are taken care of when they are away from their homes
- Identifying children to be placed in suitable adoptive homes, in cases when returning them to their biological family is not possible or appropriate

Why has a social worker from Nevada County Child Welfare Services come to my home?

A social worker has come to your home because the Department received a report that your child may have been abused or neglected or at risk of being abused or neglected. State law requires professionals who have contact with children to report any known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect. Concerned citizens may also file a report if they suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. A report is made on behalf of the child, it is not made against a parent or a family.

The law requires Child Welfare Services to look into these reports of child abuse or neglect in order to protect children. A social worker's visit to your home is part of this assessment.

The law requires reports of suspected severe neglect, sexual, emotional or physical abuse to be cross-reported to a local law enforcement agency. The police often perform an independent investigation of the allegations to see if a crime has been committed. Even though a police officer may have discussed these allegations with you, a social worker must still assess the allegations to ensure the safety of your child.

What services does Nevada County Child Welfare Services provide?

A variety of services and community resources are available to assist children and families who are clients of Child Welfare Services:

Differential Response (DR)

Once a report of suspected child abuse or neglect is received by the Child Welfare Services Hotline, it is evaluated using an evidence-based assessment known as Structured Decision Making (SDM), which helps guide towards the most appropriate response.

If it is determined that an in-person response must be made by an Emergency Response (ER) social worker, the worker will assess further involvement by Child Welfare Services through one of three response "paths." This family-centered, community-based approach is known as the Differential Response model.

Path 1: Community Response

Path 2: In-person response from a Child Welfare Services' social worker

Path 3: Allegations "substantiated" i.e., found to be true, referral closed and Child Welfare case opened.

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What are my rights when a social worker comes to my home?

- You have the right to be treated fairly and with respect.
- You have the right to have the assessment conducted in your preferred language.
- You have the right to know the allegations that were made in the report; however, the law does not allow the social worker to disclose who made the report due to California confidentiality laws.
- You have the right to refuse to participate in the assessment and the right to refuse entry into your home. In most cases, families prefer to work with the social worker during the assessment process. While it is your right to refuse to participate, the social worker is still legally required to continue his/her assessment.
- You have the right to be involved in decisions regarding your family.
- You have the right to have someone with you while being questioned; however, it is against the law to use a device to record the social worker without his or her knowledge and can be punishable by California law.
- You have the right to be informed about the result of the social worker's assessment.
- You have the right to have your information kept confidential and protected.
- You have the right to appeal the final outcome of investigations with physical/emotional/sexual abuse and severe neglect allegations that have been "substantiated."
- If you feel that you have been treated unfairly, you have the right to file a complaint with the Department at (530) 273-4291 or with California Department of Social Services at (916) 651-6560.

Services

Case Management

Child Health Disability Prevention (CHDP)

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

Dependency Visitation

Differential Response

Public Health Nurses

Foster Care

Independent Living Skills

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP)

Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus)

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Interpretation Services

Linkages

Parenting Education Class

Safety Organized Practice

Wraparound Services

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What happens during an assessment?

After Child Welfare Services has been contacted by a concerned person, the social worker has up to 30 days to find out whether the physical or emotional health or safety of the child would be put at risk if the child lives in the same home as his/her parent, legal guardian, or other adult relative.

The social worker gathers information about the allegations of abuse and neglect by speaking to you and other individuals with direct knowledge of the allegation. The social worker will want to speak to all of the children in your family, particularly the child on whose behalf the report was filed. The social worker may also speak to other individuals who have relevant information concerning your family such as teachers, pediatricians, or extended family members. You may also want to provide the social worker with the names of other people who know your family.

What happens after an assessment?

After completing the assessment, the social worker determines if the allegations are "unfounded", "inconclusive" or "substantiated."

- **Unfounded:** means that it has been found that the report is false; does not represent child abuse or neglect.
- **Inconclusive:** means that there is not enough proof to determine whether child abuse or neglect occurred.
- **Substantiated:** means that based upon evidence, it is more likely than not that child abuse or neglect, as legally defined, occurred.

If an allegation is deemed to be unfounded, the referral will be closed. If the allegation is inconclusive, the social worker may talk to you about the needs that the family can identify that would improve family functioning. A referral with an inconclusive allegation will be closed. If an allegation is substantiated, the social worker will develop a plan to ensure that the child is safe.

If the finding of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse or severe neglect is substantiated, the name of the person who is alleged to have harmed the child will be sent to the Department of Justice to be placed on the Child Abuse Registry. That person has the right to appeal the Department's decision.

Safety Organized Practice

Safety Organized Practice (SOP) is a way of delivering services that is family focused and based in the community; they are services designed to help families cope with significant stresses or problems in their lives. The goal of SOP is to maintain children with their families, or to reunify them, whenever it can be done safely.

SOP services grew out of the recognition that children need a safe and stable family and that separating children from their families is traumatic for them. These services build upon the conviction that many children can be safely protected and treated within their own homes when parents are provided with services and support, and become empowered to change their lives.

SOP is most often provided to families that have come to the attention of Child Welfare Services (CWS) because of child abuse or neglect or sometimes serious parent-child conflict.

For SOP to be most effective, open and honest communication must occur between the family and their support structure, which include their CWS social worker. The support can include friends, family, community supporters, service providers, etc. The overarching goal is for the majority of the support structure to be intact and available to the family even after the CWS case is closed.

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Will my children be taken away from me?

Our goal is to make sure that children are kept healthy and safe with their parents in their own home. If there is risk of abuse or neglect, we will first assess the possibility of a safety plan which would provide services to your family that will allow your child to remain in your home. If your child has been removed from your care, you will most likely work with a social worker in developing a family reunification plan.

If it is determined that your children are at immediate risk of abuse or neglect and your child must be removed from your care, you will be asked to identify family members or friends who could care for your child. Continued contact with family members and friends make the experience of out of home placement less traumatic for your child.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

Under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Native American children and their families have certain rights provided to them under federal and state law. ICWA procedures may apply if your child is determined to be an enrolled member or eligible for enrollment in a federally recognized Native American Tribe.

The intent of ICWA is to allow the tribe, of which the child is or may be a member, to intervene on the child's behalf.

Who do I contact for more information?

Name of Social Worker

Telephone Number

Supervisor

Telephone Number

Please contact the above social worker at your earliest possible convenience so that he or she may meet with you and your family about the current assessment.

Community Resources

Family Resource Centers (FRC)

Truckee FRC (530) 587-2513

Grass Valley FRC (530) 273-4059

Penn Valley FRC (530) 432-1118 x249

North San Juan FRC (530) 292-3174

Helping Hands Nurturing Center (530) 559-2313

Sierra Nevada Children's Services (530) 272-8866

Drug and Alcohol Services

Alcoholics Anonymous (530) 272-6287

Community Recovery Resources (530) 273-9541

Common Goals (530) 274-2000

Crisis Intervention

Nevada County Adult Behavioral Health
(530) 265-1437

Nevada County Children's Behavioral Health
(530) 470-2736

Nevada County Crisis Line (530) 265-5811

National Alliance on Mental Illness
(530) 272-4566

Turning Point (530) 273-5440

Community Beyond Violence (530) 272-3467

Health & Medical Services

Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital(530) 274-6000

Nevada County Public Health (530) 265-1450

Nevada County Women, Infant & Children's (WIC)
Program (530) 265-0611

Chapa De Indian Health (530) 477-8545

Sierra Western Med Clinic (530) 274-9762

Homeless Shelters/Services

Hospitality House (530) 271-7144

Booth Family Center (530) 272-2669

Salvation Army (530) 274-3500

Women of Worth (530) 272-6851

Odyssey House (530) 265-7222

*For additional resources *

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