



# Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad  
Governor

Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer  
Director

## Child Abuse Assessment Parental Notification

DATE:

Incident #:

RE:

From:

<b>Child Protective Worker</b>		<b>Telephone Number</b>	
<b>Office Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Zip Code</b>

An assessment is a cooperative effort between the Department of Human Services and family members to identify a child and family's strengths and needs, and to develop a plan of action to address identified concerns. Iowa Code Section 232.71B requires that a child's parents be notified if an abuse assessment is being conducted concerning your child. The purpose of this letter is to notify you that a child abuse assessment is being conducted concerning your child. State law requires the child protection worker to complete the assessment within 20 business days of receiving the report. You will receive notice of the completion of the assessment report. You may already have been contacted by the child protection worker, whose name and phone number are listed above. You are encouraged to provide the child protection worker with information about your child.

(Type of abuse alleged) \_\_\_\_\_ has been alleged.

Please review the back of this letter for additional information about the child abuse assessment process. If you have questions or concerns, contact the child protection worker. If that person is not available, please leave a message or ask to speak to the worker's supervisor. Thank you.

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
CHILD PROTECTIVE ASSESSMENT SERVICES – A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES**

Iowa law requires that a child protective assessment be conducted by the Department of Human Services (DHS) when someone reports that a child has been subjected to abuse by a person responsible for the care of that child (caretaker). Caretakers may include parents, guardians, foster parents, baby-sitters and others. This guide may answer some of your questions regarding the assessment process.

**WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?** Iowa law identifies nine types of child abuse. These are: (1) Physical abuse--injuries which are not accidental, or do not have an explanation which fits the injury. Spanking a child is not considered to be physical abuse, unless it leaves a bruise or other injury. (2) Mental injury--intellectual or psychological injury which causes an observable and substantial impairment. (3) Sexual abuse--sexual activity between a child and caretaker, or allowing a child to be sexually abused. (4) Child prostitution--permitting or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution. (5) Denial of critical care (also known as neglect)--lack of food, clothing, shelter, medical or mental health treatment, supervision or other care necessary for a child's well-being when these expose a child to danger or significant harm. (6) Presence of an illegal drug in a child's body--an illegal drug is found in a child's body due to the acts or omissions of a caretaker. (This may occur through ingesting the drug by mouth, or through passive smoke inhalation.) (7) Bestiality--commission of bestiality in the presence of a child. (8) Manufacture or possession of a dangerous substance with the intent to manufacture a dangerous substance--endangerment of children by illegal drug manufacturing or having possession of dangerous chemicals intending to manufacture illegal drugs. (9) Allows access by a registered sex offender.

**WHO TURNED IN THIS REPORT?** Iowa law does not permit the child protection worker to disclose this information to you. However, you do have the right to know what allegations have been made.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DON'T COOPERATE?** If the child protection worker cannot talk to you or your family members about the incident reported, the assessment will have to be completed without information which only you can provide regarding the alleged abuse and regarding your family's strengths and concerns.

**HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO BE INVOLVED?** Persons who have information about the report may be contacted. The child protection worker is required to complete a written summary regarding all reports received by the Department in which a child may have been subjected to abuse. You and your family will be asked to participate in the assessment process and reasonable attempts will be made to include your information, opinion and wishes in the written summary.

**WHAT IS THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF AN ASSESSMENT?** In many cases, the assessment service will be concluded and your case will be closed. For situations in which you and/or your child protection worker determine that additional supports or services will be needed, these may be developed during the assessment service. In some instances, you and your family will receive continued services through the Department of Human Services. Only about 2% of cases result in the removal of a child from the family home. A removal is considered to be a last resort and only occurs in situations where the child is significantly injured or is likely to receive significant injury and the caretakers are unable or unwilling to protect the child. You will receive a written notice that the assessment has been completed. For families receiving the assessment services, you will receive a copy of the written summary which describes the incident reported and also identifies your family's strengths and concerns. This written summary may also include a recommendation for additional services or supports. In most cases, this recommendation will reflect your input and wishes. Abuse which meets specific criteria will be placed on the state's Child Abuse Registry.

**If you have further questions, contact your child protection worker whose name and phone number are listed on the other side of this form.**