



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, Second Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1067

DCS; group homes; investigations

Purpose

Includes, in the definition of *abuse*, physical injury or emotional damage of a child by an employee of a child welfare agency that is contracted with the Department of Child Safety (DCS).

Background

For purposes of DCS investigations into allegations of child abuse and neglect, *abuse* means the infliction or allowing of physical injury, impairment of bodily function or disfigurement or the infliction of or allowing another person to cause serious emotional damage as evidenced by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or untoward aggressive behavior and which emotional damage is diagnosed by a medical doctor or psychologist and is caused by the acts or omissions of an individual who has the care, custody and control of a child, including acts of sex abuse or related acts, injury resulting from exposure to volatile, toxic or flammable chemicals and unreasonable confinement of a child ([A.R.S. § 8-201](#)).

The DCS centralized intake hotline is a system established to protect children by receiving communications concerning suspected abuse or neglect. The hotline is the first step in the safety assessment and investigation process and must be operated to: 1) record communications concerning suspected abuse or neglect; 2) immediately take steps necessary to identify and locate prior communications and DCS reports related to the current communication using DCS's data system and the central registry system of Arizona; 3) quickly and efficiently provide information to a law enforcement agency or prepare a DCS report as required; and 4) determine the proper initial priority level of investigation based on the report screening assessment and direct the report to the appropriate division of DCS. If a communication provides reason to believe that a criminal offense has been committed but the communication does not meet criteria triggering a DCS report, the hotline worker must immediately provide the information to the appropriate law enforcement agency. If the identity or current location of the child victim, victim's family or the suspected abuser is known and outlined criteria apply, a hotline worker must prepare a DCS report ([A.R.S. § 8-455](#)).

Upon receiving a DCS report from the centralized intake hotline, a DCS investigator must make a prompt and thorough investigation. The investigation must evaluate and determine the nature, extent and cause of any condition created by the parents, guardian, custodian or an adult member of the victim's household that would tend to support or refute the allegation of abuse or neglect. The investigator must also determine the name, age and condition of other children in the home. If an investigator has sufficient information to determine that the child is not a victim of abuse or neglect, the investigator may close the investigation. If an allegation is substantiated, the investigator must take the child into temporary custody ([A.R.S. § 8-456](#)).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Includes, in the definition of *abuse*, physical injury or emotional damage of a child by an employee of a DCS-contracted child welfare agency where the child is placed.
2. Directs DCS hotline workers to prepare a DCS report if the identity of a person suspected of abuse is an employee of a child welfare agency, and:
 - a) the child victim is placed with the agency; and
 - b) the agency is licensed by and contracted with DCS.
3. Requires DCS reports to include the name, address and other location or contact information of an employee of a child welfare agency who is suspected of committing abuse, if both of the following apply:
 - a) the child victim is placed with the agency; and
 - b) the agency is licensed by and contracted with DCS.
4. Makes conforming changes.
5. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Prepared by Senate Research

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MM/slp