



TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

CHARLES M. PALMER, DIRECTOR

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

	DATE: <u>June 30, 1997</u>
	INCIDENT NUMBER: <hr/>

FROM:

Child Protective Services Investigative Worker		Phone Number	
Office Address	City	State IA	Zip Code

Iowa Code Subsection 232.71(1) requires that a child's parents be notified if a child abuse investigation is being conducted concerning that child. Notice is also required if the time needed to complete an investigation must be extended beyond the normal ten working days. The following is a notice about one of these situations.

You are hereby notified that an investigation has been started concerning your child(ren),

You will also be notified of the outcome of the investigation when it is completed.

An extension of the time frame for completion of this report has been requested from the Juvenile Court. The new completion date is:

The reason for this extension is:

Please turn to the back of this notification for information about child abuse investigations. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the child protective services investigative worker listed above. If that person is not available, please leave a message or ask to speak to the protective services supervisor. Thank you.

The Iowa Code (Chapter 232, beginning at Section 68) requires that a child protective investigation must be conducted by the Department of Human Services (DHS) when someone reports that a child has been abused by a person responsible for the care of that child (caretaker). Caretakers may include parents, guardians, relatives, foster parents, or baby-sitters. This guide is provided to answer some of the most common questions asked by families and caretakers about protective services investigations.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE? The Iowa Code defines six types of child abuse: (1) **Physical Abuse** -- injuries which are not accidental, or do not have an explanation which fits the injury. Spanking or slapping is not physical abuse, unless it leaves a bruise or other injury; (2) **Mental Injury** -- intellectual or psychological injury which causes an observable and substantial impairment, resulting from the acts or omissions of a caretaker; (3) **Sexual Abuse** -- sexual activity between a child and caretaker, or allowing a child to be sexually abused by a known sexual offender; (4) **Child Prostitution** -- a caretaker permitting or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution; (5) **Denial of Critical Care** (also known as neglect) -- lack of food, clothing, shelter, or other care necessary for a child's well-being. This can include lack of necessary medical care or lack of supervision, when these failures on the part of a caretaker expose a child to danger or serious harm; (6) **Presence of an Illegal Drug in a Child's Body** -- an illegal drug is found in a child's body as a direct result of the acts or omissions of the child's caretaker.

WHO TURNED IN THIS REFERRAL? DHS policy does not permit the investigative worker to provide this information to families; however, you do have a right to know what abuse allegations are being investigated.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I DON'T COOPERATE? If the investigative worker can't talk to you or family members about the alleged abuse, the investigation will have to be completed without your side of the story being heard.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO BE INVOLVED? Persons who have information about the allegations may be contacted. The investigative worker is required to submit a written report about every investigation and send copies to the judge of the juvenile court and the county attorney. A copy is submitted to the Central Abuse Registry if the report is founded. If services are recommended, information may be shared with the person providing the services. Iowa law requires DHS to keep and publish statistics on child abuse investigations, but no names, addresses, or other identifying information is included in these statistics.

WHAT IS THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF AN INVESTIGATION? You will receive written notice about the outcome of this investigation, and information on how you may obtain a copy of the report. Upon investigation, some child abuse referrals do not turn out to be abuse, even though arising from a reporter's legitimate concern; these are called "not confirmed" reports. When there is a preponderance of evidence (more than 50% of the facts in the case) that the abuse did occur, the report is "confirmed." If the confirmed report meets a specified criteria, it will be placed on the Registry. These are "founded" reports. Founded reports are kept for ten years, then sealed. NOTE: A FOUNDED CHILD ABUSE REPORT IS NOT A CRIMINAL MATTER, AND NOT THE SAME AS A CRIMINAL CONVICTION.

WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE WITH WHAT THE CHILD ABUSE REPORT SAYS? You have a right to request review, correction, or expungement from the Registry of a child abuse report which names you as a subject, within the six-month period following completion of the investigation. The Child Abuse Registry will address your request for correction or expungement from the Registry and may modify the original finding. If you disagree with the Registry decision, you may file an Administrative Appeal. Following the Appeal decision, if you still disagree, you may take the case to district court. At any point during or after the investigation, you may ask to speak with the investigative worker or supervisor if you have additional information about the case which you think may change the investigative finding.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY FAMILY? Counseling services are recommended if there are family problems. In approximately 10% of cases, the juvenile court may become involved to ensure the safety of the children or to order counseling services. About 2% of child protective investigations result in removal of a child. Foster placement is the last resort, when a child is found to be in danger and the caretakers are not willing or able to provide protection from further abuse.

TO REPORT A CASE OF CHILD ABUSE, CALL YOUR NEAREST DHS OFFICE, OR CALL THE 24-HOUR TOLL-FREE CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE NUMBER: 1-800-362-2178. If you have further questions, please contact the investigative worker whose name is on the other side of this form.