

Child Abuse and Family Assessment Parental Notification

DATE:

Incident #:

RE:

From:

Child Protective Worker		Telephone Number	
Office Address	City	State	Zip Code

An assessment is a cooperative effort between the Department of Health and 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. The purpose of this letter is to notify you, as required by Iowa Code Section 232.71B, that an assessment is being conducted concerning your child. The assessment will take up to 20 business days and you will receive notice when the assessment report is complete. 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 and family.

(Type of abuse alleged) _____ has been alleged.

Please review the back of this letter for additional information about the 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 Health and Human Services
Child Protective Assessment Services – A Guide for Families

Iowa law requires that a child protective assessment (either a family assessment or a child abuse assessment) be conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 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, babysitters, and others. This guide may answer some of your questions regarding the assessment process.

WHAT IS A FAMILY ASSESSMENT? A family assessment is a strength-based, family-centered assessment path designed to engage low to moderate risk families in the services needed to keep children from becoming involved in the child welfare system. During a family assessment we will discuss the safety of your child or children, the resources your family has available to address any current concerns, and your thoughts about services that could assist your family, if needed. Persons who have information about the reported concerns may also be contacted. A family assessment is different from the traditional child abuse assessment because a family assessment **does not** involve a finding of abuse and there is no consideration for placement on the state's Central Abuse Registry. A family assessment is completed within 10 business days. Your family will receive a written notice that the assessment has been completed as well as a copy of the assessment report which includes any service recommendations. A family assessment requires the cooperation of the family. Should a family choose not to cooperate, HHS is required to address the reported concerns as a child abuse assessment.

WHAT IS A CHILD ABUSE ASSESSMENT? A child abuse assessment is a strength-based, family-centered assessment path designed to engage higher risk families in the traditional process to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred. During a child abuse assessment, we will discuss the safety of your child or children, gather information about the reported abuse or neglect, discuss resources your family has available to address any current concerns, and determine the appropriate service level to meet your family's needs. Persons who have information about the reported concerns may also be contacted. A child abuse assessment **does** involve a finding of abuse and abuse which meets specific criteria will be placed on the state's Central Abuse Registry. A child abuse assessment is completed within 20 business days. Your family will receive a written notice that the assessment has been completed as well as a copy of the assessment report which includes any service recommendations. A child abuse assessment requires the cooperation of the family. Should a family choose not to cooperate, the HHS will be required to complete the assessment without your input.

WILL MY CHILD BE REMOVED? Removal of the child is considered to be a last resort. Removal occurs only when the child cannot be protected in any other way. HHS does not have any legal authority to remove a child. If a removal is necessary, the HHS must seek the assistance of law enforcement or obtain a court order.

WHO TURNED IN THIS REPORT? Iowa law does not permit the child protection worker or HHS to disclose this information to you. However, you do have the right to know what allegations have been made. These allegations will be discussed with you during the assessment.

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