

Your Rights

All parents and caregivers involved with the Division of Children and Family Services are entitled to certain rights, such as:

- To know the nature of the report regarding your child.
- How the assessment will be conducted and how long it will take.
- The suspected harm and /or risk to your child.
- What was found as a result of the assessment and what will happen next.
- To receive communication assistance if you have special needs. To request information in your native language and request an interpreter.
- To refuse any services at any time.

Children also have certain rights, including to be nurtured and live safely in their home. Children who are subject to court order related to child protection have additional rights.

For a complete explanation of these rights, please visit our website at cfs.cuyahogacounty.us.

Contact Information

My Assigned Child Protection Specialist

Telephone Number

My Child Protection Specialist's Supervisor

Telephone Number

Important Phone Numbers

First Call For Help216-436-2000

Domestic Violence Hotline.....216-391-4957

Mobile Crisis Team.....216-623-6888

Office of Child Support Services.....216-443-5100

Cuyahoga Job and Family Services.216-987-7000



Division of Children and Family Services
Main Phone: (216) 431-4500
3955 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
www.cfs.cuyahogacounty.us

Regular Office Hours :
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday thru Friday

24-Hour Child Abuse/Neglect
Hotline
(to report abuse/neglect):
(216) 696-KIDS (696-5437)

A Parent's Guide to Working with the Division of Children and Family Services



Cuyahoga County
Together We Thrive

Division of Children and Family Services



Working with the Division of Children and Family Services

You have been contacted by a Child Protection Specialist because we received a report of concern about your children.

The concern we received may be related to alleged child abuse or neglect. We also reach out to families when they may be in need of services or a child may be dependent through no fault of the parent.

What can I expect from the Child Protection Specialist?

A Child Protection Specialist (CPS) will talk with you to learn more about the concern and offer support and resources if needed. In order to assess the safety, strengths, needs and risk to your children, the CPS will:

- Explain the concerns and our process, including the steps and timeframes in the assessment
- Engage you in a conversation and, when appropriate, ask for your consent to conduct assessment activities, such as interviewing your children and talking with others about your family.

The purpose of the Division of Children and Family Services is to assure that children at risk of abuse or neglect are protected and nurtured within a family and with the support of the community.

Our programs have the goal of stabilizing and reuniting families that have been weakened through poverty, illness or crisis, resulting in neglect or abuse to children.

We offer many services aimed at strengthening family life so that the children can be served at home or returned to their own home as soon as their safety may be assured.

- Explain activities that may be conducted without your consent due to child safety concerns. Encourage you to talk about your worries and help you find solutions.
- Help you provide safety for your child, if necessary.
- Invite you to a Team Decision Making meeting if there are concerns for the safety of your child.

What will happen next?

- If there is no need for our services, then the case is closed after we complete an assessment.
- Most families we remain involved with work with us on a voluntary basis, with their children at home.
- If it is determined that children are not safe in their own home, we have a Team Decision Making meeting to decide what to do.
- You will always be included on any plan developed for your child.
- If there are no other options to keep your child safe, the CPS does have an obligation to ask Juvenile Court for custody.

- If the agency engages the court to help keep your child safe, you will be notified of this and your rights will be explained to you at a hearing.
- We work with parents to safely return their child to their care as quickly as possible.

What can my Child Protection Specialist do to help me?

The CPS will talk with you about what supports you might need and what services make the most sense for your family and situation. Some of the services the CPS can refer you to include:

- Community Collaboratives for a variety of supports right in your neighborhood.
- In-home or office-based therapeutic services.
- Professional services for any number of concerns including alcohol or drug use, mental health and domestic violence.
- Services for your children to help them grow and thrive.

If your family's case remains open, your CPS will write a plan with you to identify the specific goal, objectives and activities. Your CPS will review your family's progress with you and help you achieve your goal.

Together We Keep Children Safe