

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | January 4, 2021

North Dakota launches new child protection services intake process featuring toll-free statewide child abuse and neglect reporting number

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services and the state’s 19 human service zones announced the launch today of a statewide toll-free child abuse and neglect reporting line that is part of a new child protection services (CPS) intake process.

Beginning today, Jan. 4, **individuals who suspect a child is being abused or neglected in North Dakota should call 833-958-3500**, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Central Time (7 a.m. – 4 p.m. Mountain Time) Monday – Friday, **to make a report**. If a child is in immediate danger, people should call 9-1-1.

The department’s Chief Operating Officer Sara Stolt explained that the change is part of the ongoing collaboration between the state and local partners to provide human services more efficiently and effectively.

“During this latest social service redesign effort, we created a new statewide centralized intake unit staffed by a dedicated team of 12 specialized CPS intake workers and two supervisors who live and work across the state in the human service zones,” Stolt said. “The CPS intake workers will ask focused questions, gather needed facts, work with supervisors to triage reports and provide a complete intake referral to local CPS professionals when reports meet criteria.”

She said this will allow local CPS professionals to act more quickly to protect children while devoting more time to strengthening and supporting families while they are still together, which will help children remain safe in their family homes. This aligns with a key department priority: building stronger families.

Having a specialized intake unit will also ensure more consistency and should reduce the need for call backs. If one intake worker is busy, the line will roll to another.

“The safety and well-being of children remain our top priorities. Redesigning this process will provide consistent, high quality and timely responses,” Stolt said.

Children and Family Services Division Director Cory Pedersen explained that local child welfare professionals will continue to provide child protection services locally.

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“Law enforcement and health care professionals who need a CPS worker to respond to their location immediately will continue to call their local human service zone office directly. However, supporting documents should be faxed to the new centralized CPS Intake Unit at 701-328-0361,” Pedersen said.

He said the CPS Intake Unit will log reports consistently into the state’s FRAME child welfare case management system, using a new intake form to assure needed details are gathered as quickly and completely as possible, and will request records such as medical or police records if appropriate.

Cases will be transferred to the local CPS supervisor in the county where the child is located when the report is made. The supervisor will assign the case to a local CPS worker. The local CPS supervisors and workers are responsible for notifying law enforcement of potential criminal situations.

Information about North Dakota’s child protection program is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/cps.

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