

Child Intervention: Reporting a Concern

Child Intervention is part of the Government of Alberta. We respond to concerns about the safety of children and youth.

We are sometimes also referred to as “child intervention services”, “child welfare” or “child protective services.” Our top priority is always the safety of children, youth and families.

Under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA), we have the legal authority to deliver services to children, youth and families in certain circumstances. This Act sets out specific reasons for us becoming involved with families. These reasons are based on risks to a child or youth’s safety, security and development.

Who can report a concern

Anyone can contact Child Intervention when they are worried about the safety, security or development of a child or youth.

We rely on families, community members and professionals to contact us if a child or youth may be at risk.

If you believe that a child or youth’s safety, security or development is at risk, the law requires you to report it.

How to report a concern

Call the Child Intervention provincial intake line, open 24 hours a day, at **1-800-638-0715**.

Call 911 if you or the person you are reporting is in immediate danger.

What happens when you call

Your call will be answered by an automated system asking you to pick a Region to connect with. All calls received are recorded for quality assurance.

To find a region/DFNA go to www.alberta.ca and search “Children and Family Services office”.

Time will be required when you call, and it is important you have the time to answer questions when calling.

The Child Intervention practitioner will gather information by asking questions regarding basic demographics of the family members (names, birthdates, address, etc.) and to understand the family’s current circumstances, for example:

- The current circumstances of, and if there is immediate danger, to the child(ren) or youth?
- Name or identity of parent or guardian allegedly causing the child or youth harm.
- What incident prompted the report?
- What prompted you to make the report today? Is this situation recent, historical or ongoing?
- The behaviours that you are hearing and seeing the guardians/parents do or not do, how often these behaviours occur, and the impact of these behaviours on the children or youth.
- Exception to the worry, strengths of the family, how those strengths impact the child or youth, the family and natural supports for the child, youth or family.
- The family culture.

You also may receive a call back from a Child Intervention Practitioner to gather further information after the initial call/referral, and this person may be different than the initial person you spoke to.

If you do not know the answer that is okay, simply answer “I do not know.”

What happens next

The Child Intervention practitioner uses the information that they’ve collected to help decide what steps are needed to address the reported concerns for the safety of the child or youth. This could include making additional calls to talk to school or daycare staff, doctors, extended family members, neighbours or family friends, and other people in contact with the child or youth if deemed appropriate. This information is used to decide if the matter can be:

Closed

Closed with a referral to other community or government services, if the child or youth is deemed not to be in need of

intervention under the legislation, but the family may benefit from other supports.

Opened to safety assessment, as the concerns require further assessment. For more information on safety assessments, please visit alberta.ca and search “What is a safety assessment fact sheet”.

Other important information

The caller should not be interviewing children or youth when there are concerns for their safety/wellbeing

Assessments of Child or youth wellbeing and safety, as it pertains to CYFEA, should only be conducted by a delegated practitioner from Children and Family Services. Callers *may* be asked to gather more information or provide further clarity on the reported concerns, but will not be asked to conduct interviews/assessment of children or youth.

There may not be a record of a call that a community member made to Child Intervention

Practices were not to keep information on those matters that did not meet the legislation. Changes were made to maintain all information.

Professionals who report a concern may be contacted afterwards

Professionals who report concerns may receive a callback once the report has been assessed.

The level of detail provided during these calls will vary depending on what role a professional may play in planning or delivering services to that child, youth or family.

There are options for someone who had concerns to find out about the status of the report

Connect directly with the Child Intervention practitioner that took the call or their supervisor. If you cannot recall the name of the practitioner, you can call the provincial intake number and a Child Intervention practitioner can assist you.

If additional information becomes available to the caller this should be reported

After the call if you remember additional information or learn something new that you think would be important to know, you can always call back.

The parent or guardian may not be notified that a concern was reported to Children and Family Services

If the matter does not open to safety assessment, the parent or guardian may not be contacted.

How can you learn more

To find contact information go to www.alberta.ca and search “Children and Family Services office”.

Resources

For the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act visit alberta.ca/family-law-legislation