

SCAN Policies Database State Profile 2023: Maryland

Overview of the SCAN Policies Database

The State Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Policies Database compiles data on the definitions and policies that states use in their surveillance of child maltreatment, along with data on associated risk and protective factors. The SCAN Policies Database is funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in collaboration with the Children's Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Mathematica leads this project in partnership with Child Trends.

The project's purpose is to review and compile information from states' definitions and policies to create a database of those definitions and policies that can be used for analysis. The SCAN Policies Database is a resource for researchers, analysts, child welfare agency staff, and others interested in examining differences between states in their definitions and policies on child maltreatment and how they change over time.

Content

The scope of the SCAN Policies Database includes information about state definitions and policies related to child abuse and neglect for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The SCAN Policies Database team gathered this information through a document collection, review, and coding process. The team obtained input from states on data collection through a confirmation and verification process. More information about these data collection procedures can be found in the data user's guide and data collection protocol, accessible at <https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com/data-use-resources>.

The SCAN Policies Database 2023 represents data collected, reviewed, and verified between June 2023 and July 2024. The data reflect the state definitions and policies for the calendar year 2023. The scope of topics in the database includes states' definitions of child abuse and neglect, as well as information about policies related to reporting, screening, and investigating child maltreatment. Key aspects of the child welfare systems' response and context are also included.

The content in the SCAN Policies Database is organized into six domains. The state profiles, codebook, data collection protocol, and data file are also organized by these domains. In the protocol, each question begins with a letter prefix identifying the domain for each variable. The six domains with the identifying protocol number prefix are listed below.

Domain	Question prefix
Definitions	D
Reporting	R
Screening	S
Investigation	I
Child welfare response	W
Child welfare system context	C

State profile

This SCAN Policies Database state profile is a summary of the information collected about the definitions and policies for the identified state. Each of the six domains contain a set of tables that depict the state's information for all variables within that domain.

The state profile presents data for each variable with “yes,” “no,” “unknown,” or other response, as appropriate. The response of “unknown” appears for topics that could not be located from the state's available resources or verified with that state. In some cases, “logical skip” appears when a question was not applicable to a particular state, given a related response on a preceding question. Some information was not included in the state profile to ensure alignment with Executive Orders or other Presidential Actions.

Data use resources

Several data use resources are available to support users of the SCAN Policies Database:

- **Data user's guide:** The guide has detailed information about the data set, including the process used to collect and review the data, the scope of information included in the data set, guidance on using the data, such as how to link the data with other data sources, and notes about specific topics. The data user's guide includes appendices, including information about changes to the data between 2021 and 2023 that reflect changes to state laws and policies during that time period. There is one data user's guide that is updated and applicable for all rounds of data collection for the SCAN Policies Database.
- **Codebook:** The codebook provides information about each variable in the data set, including variable names, labels, definitions, protocol number, variable type, and frequencies. There are separate codebooks to summarize the data from each round of data collection.
- **Errata statement:** The errata statement presents corrections applied to previous rounds of data for the SCAN Policies Database. Starting in 2023, there is one errata statement that is updated and applicable for all rounds of data collection for the SCAN Policies Database.
- **Data collection protocol:** The protocol has the questions used to collect information about states' laws and policies as part of the data review and coding process for each round of data collection. There are separate data collection protocols for each round of data collection for the SCAN Policies Database.

These data use resources can be found on the SCAN Policies Database website (<https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com/data-use-resources>) or from the National Data Archive for Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) (<https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/>).

More information

More information about the SCAN Policies Database can be found at <https://www.scanpoliciesdatabase.com>. General inquiries can be submitted to SCANPoliciesDatabase@mathematica-mpr.com.

State identifying information

Table I. State Identifying information

	Response
State abbreviation	MD
State Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) code	24
Census region code	South
State verified coding of information	Yes
State confirmed documents reviewed	Yes
State definitions and policies for calendar year	2023
Data version	2023v1

Domain D: Definitions of child maltreatment

Table D.I. State's definition of child maltreatment

	Response
1. Types of maltreatment included in state definition	
a. Physical abuse	Yes
b. Excessive corporal punishment	No
c. Sexual abuse	Yes
d. Emotional maltreatment	Yes
e. Neglect	Yes
f. Inadequate clothing	Yes
g. Inadequate shelter	Yes
h. Malnourishment, inadequate food	Yes
i. Medical neglect, inadequate medical care	Yes
j. Failure to thrive	Yes
k. Educational neglect	No
l. Abandonment	Yes
m. Injurious environment. Likelihood of harm to child's health, physical well-being	Yes
n. Drug lab. Child present within structure where methamphetamine is being created	Yes
o. Inadequate supervision. Failure to meet parent or caretaker responsibilities	Yes
p. Drug or alcohol misuse. Parental drug or alcohol misuse causing harm to child	Yes
q. Prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol	No
r. Illicit substance. Illegally providing a controlled substance to a child	Yes
s. Human trafficking, involuntary servitude, sexual servitude	Yes
t. Female genital mutilation	No
u. Shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma	Yes
v. Failure to protect. Failure to protect from harm	Yes
w. Domestic violence. Exposure to domestic violence	Yes
x. Factitious disorder by proxy	No
y. Institutional abuse/neglect	No
z. Other definition (specify)	No
2. Subtypes of maltreatment included in state definition	
a. Subtypes of maltreatment considered abuse	Abuse includes physical injury and sexual abuse; Sexual abuse includes sexual trafficking; Mental injury is a subtype of both abuse and neglect
b. Subtypes of maltreatment considered neglect	Neglect includes failure to provide proper care and attention, malnourishment, inadequate clothing, inadequate shelter, and medical neglect; Mental injury is a subtype of both abuse and neglect
c. Subtypes of maltreatment considered other than abuse or neglect	Not applicable

Table D.1 (*continued*)

	Response
3. Level of harm included in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Inflicts harm	Yes
b. Imminent danger or substantial risk of harm	Yes
4. Differences in level of harm included in state's definition of child maltreatment by type of maltreatment	No
5. Type of harm or injury specified in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Death, bodily injury, impairment of physical condition	Yes
b. Impairment of mental or emotional condition	Yes
c. Harmful environment, conditions	Yes
d. Type of harm or injury not specified	No
e. Other (specify)	No
6. Variation in extent of injury or harm by maltreatment type in the state's definition of child maltreatment	No
7. Perpetrator identified as part of state's definition of child maltreatment	Yes
8. Types of perpetrators specified as part of state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Any person	Yes
b. Parent	Yes
c. Guardian	Yes
d. Caregiver/caretaker	Yes
e. Family member or parent's paramour	Yes
f. Household member	Yes
g. Person responsible for child	Yes
h. Other (specify)	No
9. Types of perpetrators vary by type of maltreatment	Yes
10. Explanation of variation in types of perpetrator by maltreatment type	Any individual can be a perpetrator of sex trafficking; For neglect, a perpetrator can only be a parent, guardian, or caregiver of the alleged victim
11. Child age included in definition of child maltreatment	Yes
12. Specific child age in definition of child maltreatment	Under age 18
13. Variability of child age by type of maltreatment	No

Table D.II. Child maltreatment definition exemptions

	Response
1. Exemption included in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Financial issues, financial inability to provide for a child	No
b. Discipline; physical discipline, if it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child	Yes
c. Safe haven exemption; newborn relinquished or abandoned in accordance with infant safe haven and safe surrender laws	Yes
d. Infant testing positive for drugs – medical; newborn with positive test for controlled substance due to parent's medical treatment	Yes
e. Religious observance; parent relies on spiritual or religious forms of medical treatment	No
f. Other exemption (specify)	Yes - Physical injury of a child by accidental means
2. Safe haven exemption included in state's definition of child maltreatment	
a. Must leave a child at specific safe haven locations or designated providers	Yes
b. Child must be left by parent or parent's agent	Yes
c. Child must be left by a certain age (specify)	Yes - 10 days old or younger
d. No intent to return	Yes
e. Child must be left unharmed	Yes
f. Other (specify)	No

Table D.III. Definitions and response for child fatalities and near-fatalities cases

	Response
1. State's definition of fatalities or deaths caused by child maltreatment	
a. Not specified or defined	No
b. Injury from abuse or neglect caused death	No
c. Abuse or neglect was contributing factor in death	No
d. Death of child who was in child welfare custody or foster care	Yes
e. Other (specify)	No
2. State conducts case reviews with a child fatality review team or a similar review process for fatalities caused by child abuse or neglect	Yes, reviews are required for all or some cases
3. State's definition of near-fatalities or near-deaths caused by child maltreatment	
a. Not specified or defined	No
b. General reference to a serious or critical condition or injury that is life threatening with a substantial risk of death	Yes
c. Specific injury or specific medical treatment or intervention (specify)	No
d. Other (specify)	No
4. State conducts case reviews with a review team or similar review process for near-fatalities caused by child abuse or neglect	Yes, reviews are required for all or some cases

Domain R: Reporting child abuse and neglect

Table R.I. Reporting policies

	Response
1. Statewide centralized reporting	Yes
2. Decentralized reporting	Logical Skip
3. Standard for reporting child maltreatment	
a. Known abuse and neglect	No
b. Reasonable cause to believe a child was abused or neglected	Yes
4. Universal mandated reporting	No
5. Required training for mandated reporters	No
6. Penalties for failure to report	Yes, some mandated reporters
7. Specific penalties for failure to report	
a. Criminal charges	Yes
b. Civil charges	No
c. Professional licensure suspended or revoked	No
d. Other (specify)	Yes - Fine up to \$10,000; Complaint filed with the appropriate licensing board, county board of education, or the appropriate agency, institution, or license facility at which the person is employed
8. Penalties for false reporting	Yes
9. Specific penalties for false reporting	
a. Criminal charges	Yes
b. Civil charges	No
c. Professional license suspended or revoked	No
d. Other (specify)	No
10. Immunity for reporters of child abuse and neglect	Yes
11. Information requested at the time of report	
a. Identifying information of child	Yes
b. Location and contact information of child and family	Yes
c. Type and severity of suspected maltreatment	Yes
d. Date of suspected maltreatment	Yes
e. Identifying and other information of alleged perpetrator(s)	Yes
f. Identifying and other information of reporter	Yes
g. Identifying information of child's parents, guardian, or caregiver/caretaker	Yes
h. Identifying and other information of family or household members	Yes
i. Information on prior maltreatment	Yes
j. Other (specify)	Yes - Collateral contact; The general condition, emotional and physical state, and proximity to threat of all children; The family's likely level of cooperation or overall receptivity to accepting agency intervention or assistance; Any potential danger to an investigating worker

Table R.I (*continued*)

	Response
12. Anonymity of reporter	General public (not mandated reporters) can remain anonymous
13. Tribal involvement in state or local public child welfare agency's process to accept reports of Tribal cases	No, Tribes are not involved
14. State requires all notifications of substance-exposed newborns (SENs) to be submitted as reports of child maltreatment	
a. State does not require all cases of SENs to be reported for child maltreatment, but they could be reported if they meet certain criteria	Yes
b. State requires all SENs to be reported as child maltreatment	No
c. Other (specify)	No
15. Accepts reports of risk without an allegation of child maltreatment (risk-only reports)	Yes

Table R.II. Types of mandated reporters

	Response	Response	Response
1. Types of mandated reporters	Included in state's definition of mandated reporters	Training required ¹	Subject to penalties for failure to report ²
a. Foster parents	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
b. School staff - teachers	Yes	Logical Skip	Yes
c. School bus drivers or other transportation staff	Yes	Logical Skip	No
d. Before- /after-school program staff	Yes	Logical Skip	No
e. Child care staff	Yes	Logical Skip	No
f. Camp counselors, directors, or administrators	Yes	Logical Skip	No
g. Athletic coaches or staff	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
h. Medical or dental professionals	Yes	Logical Skip	Yes
i. Substance abuse disorder treatment providers	Yes	Logical Skip	Yes
j. Mental health, counselors, or other social service professionals	Yes	Logical Skip	Yes
k. Police or other law enforcement	Yes	Logical Skip	Yes
l. Emergency medical technicians, firefighters, or other emergency personnel	Yes	Logical Skip	No
m. Judges	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
n. District attorneys or other attorneys	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
o. Guardians ad litem or court-appointed special advocates	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
p. Other court personnel	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
q. Shelter staff	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
r. Those who work in fields processing or monitoring print, film, or computer images	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
s. Religious clergy	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
t. Volunteers	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
u. Coroners or medical examiners	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip
v. Staff or contractors of state and county agencies	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip

Table R.II (*continued*)

	Response	Response	Response
w. Other type of mandated reporter (specify)	No	Logical Skip	Logical Skip

¹ Responses in this column can equal logical skip when the given type of mandated reporter is not included in the state's definition of mandated reporters or when no training is required for mandated reporters (Table R.II). Responses in this column can be yes when a state has universal mandated reporting (Table R.I) and all mandated reporters require training (Table R.II).

² Responses in this column can equal logical skip when the given type of mandated reporter is not included in the state's definition of mandated reporters or when no mandated reporters are subject to penalties (Table R.I). Responses in this column can be yes when a state has universal mandated reporting (Table R.I) and when all adults or all mandated reporters are subject to penalties (Table R.I).

Domain S: Screening reports of child abuse and neglect

Table S.I. Screening policies

	Response
1. Statewide centralized screening	No
2. How screening is decentralized	Each county/region has own screening unit
3. Information required to screen in report	
a. Identifying information of child	Yes
b. Location and contact information of child and family	Yes
c. Type and severity of suspected maltreatment	Yes
d. Date of suspected maltreatment	No
e. Identifying and other information of alleged perpetrator(s)	No
f. Other (specify)	No

Table S.II. Screening decision process and activities

	Response	Required cases	Conditions or types of cases
1. Decision processes used during screening			
a. Supervisory review	Yes	Required for all	—
b. Team-based decision	No	Logical Skip	—
c. Individual screener	No	Logical Skip	—
d. Other (specify)	No	Logical Skip	—
e. Unknown	No	—	—
2. Variability of decision process used for screening			
a. Consistent statewide	Yes	—	—
b. Varies locally	No	—	—
3. Certain activities or information are required as part of screening	Yes		
4. Activities or information required as part of screening			
a. Safety or risk assessment	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
b. Review agency records for prior involvement with child protective services	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
c. Other (specify)	Yes - Review of sex offender registry and Maryland Judiciary Case search; Complete Child Abuse/Neglect screening and response time assessment; Check history on Department of Juvenile Services dashboard	Required for all	Not applicable
5. Types of safety or risk assessment used during screening			
a. Structured decision making	Yes	—	—
b. Other (specify)	No	—	—
6. Consistency of screening activities/information			
a. Consistent statewide	Yes	—	—
b. Varies locally (specify)	No	—	—

Table S.III. Screeners

	Response
1. Screener of abuse and neglect reports	
a. Caseworkers (frontline staff)	Yes
b. Case managers (supervisors)	Yes
c. Staff in specialized screening unit	Yes
d. Other (specify)	No
2. Qualifications of screener	
a. Associate's degree	No
b. Bachelor's degree	No
c. Master's degree	Yes
d. Training for screening (specify)	Yes - Screeners must be properly trained on Structured Decision Making (SDM) or, screening practices aligned with Family-Centered Practices, and apply screening policies that allow screeners to obtain the most comprehensive and complete information possible to inform decision making and subsequent agency actions
e. Years of experience (specify)	Yes - Some screening positions require one year of experience, other do not require any
f. Other (specify)	No
3. Degree in social work or related field for screeners	Yes, required
4. Tribal involvement in state or local public child welfare agency's process to screen Tribal cases	No, Tribes are not involved

Domain I: Investigations of child abuse and neglect

Table I.I. Investigations policies

	Response
1. Findings from child maltreatment investigations can lead to criminal penalties	Yes
2. Investigator for reports	
a. Caseworkers (frontline staff)	Yes
b. Case managers (supervisors)	No
c. Staff in specialized investigations unit	Yes
d. Law enforcement	Yes
e. Other (specify)	No
3. Qualifications of investigator	
a. Associate's degree	No
b. Bachelor's degree	Yes
c. Master's degree	No
d. Training for conducting investigations (specify)	Yes - The agencies responsible for investigating reported cases of suspected sexual abuse, including the local department, the appropriate law enforcement agencies, and the local State's Attorney, have a joint investigation procedure for conducting joint investigations of sexual abuse, which includes ongoing training program for personnel involved in the investigation or prosecution of sexual abuse cases
e. Years of experience (specify)	No
f. Other (specify)	No
4. Degree in social work or related field for investigators	Yes, required
5. Level of evidence required for substantiation (founded/indicated/confirmed)	Preponderance of evidence
6. Investigation determination can result in an "inconclusive" finding	No

Table I.II. Required activities/information for investigation

	Response	Required cases	Conditions or types of cases
1. Certain activities or information required for the investigation process	Yes		
2. Specific activities or information required for investigation			
a. Review agency records for prior involvement with child protective services	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
b. Visit to child's home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
c. Interview or observation of child victim	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
d. Interview or observation of other children living in child's home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
e. Risk or safety assessment	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
f. Evaluation of home environment or home study	Yes	Required for some	Physical or sexual abuse; Neglect; Mental injury
g. Interviews with child's parents, caregivers, or other adults residing in child's home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
h. Check of criminal records for adults in home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
i. Check of child welfare or central registry for prior child maltreatment allegations against adults in home	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
j. Medical evaluation	Yes	Required for some	Only if considered pertinent
k. Mental health evaluation	Yes	Required for some	If mental injury is suspected, an assessment by two of the following: (1) a licensed physician, (2) a licensed psychologist, or (3) a licensed social worker
l. Interview alleged perpetrator	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
m. Interview reporter or collateral source	Yes	Required for all	Not applicable
n. Other (specify)	Yes - Parental screening for substance use and domestic violence	Required for some	Required if the initial referral indicates that parental substance use or intimate partner violence is impacting the safety of children in the home

Domain W: Child welfare response

Table W.I. Differential or alternative response

	Response
1. Differential/alternative response	Yes--implemented statewide
2. Types of maltreatment eligible for differential/alternative response	Only certain types of maltreatment are eligible
3. Types of maltreatment <u>not</u> eligible for differential/alternative response	
a. Cases involving child fatalities and near-fatalities	Yes
b. Substance-exposed infants	No
c. Physical abuse	No
d. Sexual abuse	Yes
e. Neglect	No
f. Abandoned infants	No
g. Other (specify)	No
4. Eligibility for differential/alternative response determined by a risk determination	Yes
5. Tools used to determine risk for differential/alternative response	No
6. Risk level eligible for differential/alternative response	
a. No risk	No
b. Low risk	Yes
c. Moderate risk	No
d. Other (specify)	No
e. Unknown	No
7. Other types of cases or conditions eligible for differential/alternative response	
a. No other cases or conditions	No
b. No immediate safety concerns	No
c. No or few prior reports of child abuse or neglect	No
d. Other (specify)	Yes - A reassessment of the report or relevant facts that demonstrate that the case meets the criteria for an Alternative Response and a determination that accepted services would address all issues of risk of abuse or neglect and child safety
8. When is determination made for differential/alternative response	
a. At the time of screening to assign to differential response	No
b. After a report is screened in	Yes
c. Other (specify)	No
9. Referrals to community services for cases engaged in differential response	
a. No	No
b. Yes - for all cases	No
c. Yes - when families express interest	No
d. Yes - when there is a determination of risk	Yes
e. Yes - other (specify)	No

Table W.II. In-home services, foster care, and permanency

	Response
1. In-home services provided for unsubstantiated cases to maintain intact families	Yes--implemented statewide
2. In-home services provided post reunification	Yes--implemented statewide
3. Permanency	
a. Kinship guardianship as a permanency option	Yes
b. Subsidized guardianship	Yes
c. Subsidized kinship guardianship	Yes
d. Subsidized adoption	Yes
4. Foster care case management staff	
a. State/county public agency staff	Yes
b. Contracted provider staff	No
c. Tribal agency staff	No
5. Qualifications of foster care case managers	
a. Associate degree	No
b. Bachelor's degree	No
c. Master's degree	Yes
d. Training for case management (specify)	Yes - Must complete an approved training program and pass a competency test before being granted permanent employment status; Meet mandatory standards for continuing education
e. Years of experience (specify)	No
f. Other (specify)	Yes - Licensed as a Graduate Social Worker (on or by June 30, 2018), Master Social Worker (on or after July 1, 2018), Certified Social Worker or Certified Social Worker-Clinical
6. Degree in social work or related field for foster care case managers	Yes, required

Table W.III. Tribal foster care and Tribes that directly operate Title IV-E programs through an agreement with HHS

	Response
1. Tribal involvement in foster care for Tribal cases	No, Tribes within state do not provide foster care
2. Tribes directly operate a Title IV-E program through an agreement with US HHS	No
3. Number of Tribes that directly operate a Title IV-E program through an agreement with US HHS	Logical Skip
4. Specify Tribes that directly operate a Title IV-E program through an agreement with US HHS	Not applicable

Table W.IV. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

	Response
1. Federal ICWA requirements codified in state law	No
2. Federal ICWA requirements that are codified in state law	Logical Skip
3. State law codifying ICWA includes state-recognized Tribes	Logical Skip

Table W.V. Extended foster care

	Response
1. Foster care extension for youth older than age 18	Yes
2. Age youth are allowed to remain in extended foster care	Up to age 21 (until 21st birthday)
3. Youth must proactively request, provide consent, or opt-in to receive extended foster care	Yes
4. Criteria for youth to remain in extended foster care	
a. There are no criteria to remain in extended foster care	No
b. Enrolled in school	Yes
c. Employed	Yes
d. Participating in workforce development/training program	Yes
e. Comply with independent living/self-sufficiency plan	No
f. Receive independent living or other services	No
g. Medical condition exemption	Yes
h. Other (specify)	No
5. Reentry to extended foster care allowed for youth older than age 18 who aged out or left foster care	Yes
6. Conditions for youth to reenter extended foster care	
a. Youth consent or sign a voluntary placement agreement	Yes
b. Youth develop an independent living plan	No
c. It is in the best interest of the youth	Yes
d. Other (specify)	Yes - Have not yet reached the age of 20 years 6 months; Youth cannot have exited foster care due to reunification, adoption, guardianship, marriage, or military duty; Comply with the voluntary placement agreement; Youth must agree to same criteria as youth to remain in extended foster care

Domain C: Child welfare system context

Table C.I. Child welfare system context

	Response
1. State- or county-administered child welfare system	State-administered
2. State operates under legal consent decree or other court-ordered monitoring	Yes - L.J. vs. Massinga

Supplemental Notes on State

Definitions

While Maryland's definition of child maltreatment does not include female genital mutilation, the state would consider it as either neglect (if the parent allowed it to occur) or physical abuse (if the parent performed the mutilation).

Reporting

Substance Exposed Newborns (SENs) notifications must meet the SEN definition and structured decision-making qualifier to screen in a report as a SEN Risk of Harm service case. All SEN Risk of Harm service cases are assigned as:

1. Primary Program Assignment: In-Home Services
2. Sub-Program Assignment: Services to Families with Children - Intake (SFC-I) for the assessment

State statute notes a report made to the local department for SEN does not create a presumption that a child has been or will be abused or neglected. However, the state policy on substance-exposed newborns states that at any time during a SEN assessment when circumstances indicate the newborn or any other child associated with the case is in serious, immediate danger and continued placement in the home is contrary to the welfare and safety of the child, the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) will consider whether the circumstances warrant taking the child into custody and petitioning the court for shelter care. After the LDSS determines petitioning the court for shelter care is warranted (or any time when the worker has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect), a maltreatment report must be made to Child Protective Services screening documenting the circumstances.

The Department of Human Services does not require training for mandated reporters; however, individual employers and governing bodies may require training regularly. For instance, each local public school system requires staff to be trained yearly.

Screening

The Child, Juvenile and Adult Management Services (CJAMS) is Maryland's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

Except for the very small jurisdictions, most local departments have a specialized unit to conduct screening activities.

"Trained staff or trained screener" is defined as those staff who have the technical skills and knowledge to receive reports/information and make a recommendation to the supervisor for appropriate resolution. Trained staff, generally classified as Family Services Caseworker, Family Services Case Work Specialist, Social Worker, or their supervisors, are required to participate in ongoing child welfare services training.

Investigations

A report screened in as an investigative response can be changed to an alternative response if the worker determines during the course of the response that the case meets the criteria for an alternative response. A report screened in as an alternative response can be changed to an investigative response if the worker determines during the assessment that the case meets the criteria for an investigative response.

The state has a Child Advocacy Center where professionals from different disciplines (social workers, local law enforcement investigators, medical and mental health professionals, prosecutors, and victim advocates) work together as a team to respond to reports of child sexual abuse.

Child welfare response

For cases not eligible for alternative response, the LDSS must consider whether it has other information leading to a conclusion that an alternative response would not be the most appropriate intervention to meet the needs of the family or to ensure the safety of children. The supervisor considers the following factors in making this determination, although the mere presence of one of the factors does not rule out assignment to alternative response:

1. History of a family's inability or refusal to participate in an alternative response assessment, including those situations where a family refuses the worker access to a child; family refuses to discuss allegations; family refuses to cooperate, and risk and safety are a concern; or family rejects the services necessary to address immediate safety issues for the child;
2. Multiple similar reports (within 2 years);
3. Allegations that the individual suspected of abuse or neglect is responsible for domestic violence currently occurring in the home;
4. Criminal history bearing on child safety;
5. A current expressed threat of serious harm to child;
6. A need for law enforcement for worker's or child safety. Involving law enforcement to conduct a joint response or to address environmental threats that are not specific to the child or family does not preclude the department from providing an alternative response;
7. A court has ordered an investigation.

The following reports of suspected abuse or neglect may not be assigned for an alternative response:

1. Occurring in an out-of-home placement;
2. Resulting in serious physical or mental injury;
3. If, in the previous 3 years, the individual suspected of abuse or neglect has been identified as responsible for abuse or neglect as documented in the records of the local department;
4. If the individual suspected of abuse or neglect has had one report assigned for an alternative response within the past 12 months or two reports assigned for an alternative response within the past 24 months.

Child welfare context

Maryland's consent decree only applies to out-of-home placement in one jurisdiction, Baltimore City.

State Statutes and Policy Documentation Sources

- Children, Md. Code, Family Law, §§ 5-701–5-715 (2022).
- Children, Md. Code, Family Law, § 5-525 (2018).
- Development of Procedures for Joint Investigations, Md. Code Regs. §§ 07-02-07-23 (n.d.).
- Eligibility, Md. Code Regs. COMAR 07.02.11.04 (2015).
- Employee Qualifications, Md. Code Regs. § 07-05-01-14 (n.d.).
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- Identification of Alleged Maltreater, Md. Code Regs. COMAR 07.02.07.10 (2020).
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