CA/N ASSESSMENT

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I. PURPOSE

CA/N assessment is the process where child welfare staff gather, analyze, and make decisions about children who are allegedly at risk of serious harm. The purpose of CA/N assessment is to determine whether:

- a risk of serious harm to the children exists;
- abuse/neglect has occurred;
- a safety plan is needed; and
- on-going services are indicated for the children/family.

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Child welfare staff shall abide by the following requirements when conducting CA/N assessments.

A. County Responsible For Conducting The CA/N Assessment

Generally, child welfare staff in the county where the children currently live are responsible for conducting the CA/N assessment. When multiple County Departments need to be involved (refer to *Special CA/N Procedures*), the counties shall work in partnership to conduct the CA/N assessment. If counties are unable to reach consensus about specific responsibilities or when an exception is needed as to which county is responsible for conducting the CA/N assessment, a child welfare supervisor shall contact the county's Office of Child Protective Services (CPS) consultant for assistance.

B. Timeframe For Completion

1. CA/N Assessments

CA/N assessments shall be completed within sixty (60) days from the date the intake information is received. A CA/N assessment is considered complete when:

- The general requirements and information collection protocol have been followed;
- Analysis and decision-making has occurred;
- Documentation has been completed and due process rights have been initiated (including entry of the preliminary CA/N disposition into the Central Registry); and
- Supervisory review and approval has occurred.

NOTE: Any report of alleged abuse or neglect received in which a foster parent is the alleged perpetrator (victims include their own child, a foster child, or any other child), <u>shall</u> be completed within thirty (30) days rather than the sixty (60) days noted above. *Please refer to Special CA/N Procedures policy, page 14 for information regarding suspension of CA/Ns.*

2. Final Central Registry Data Entry

For "indicated" CA/N dispositions, final data entry is complete when due process rights have been waived **or** the final disposition has been reached following the administrative hearing or record review, and that disposition has been entered into the Central Registry (if different from the preliminary disposition).

Note: Final data entry based on due process rights does not have an established timeframe and is not included in the sixty (60) day timeframe for completing CA/N assessments.

C. Court Ordered Access

Child welfare staff shall diligently attempt to gain the cooperation of individuals pertinent to conducting and completing CA/N assessments. When child welfare staff are unable to gain access to individuals who must be interviewed/observed or gain access to the home, a petition may be filed with the appropriate court requesting an order to allow that access.

Prior to filing any petition for court-ordered access, the child welfare supervisor shall make telephone contact with the county's attorney to gain concurrence. Petitions require eyewitness or firsthand information; therefore, hearsay or secondhand information is insufficient and must be corroborated by sources with firsthand information. County attorneys may contact SDHR Legal for additional information as needed.

Note: CA/Ns received from anonymous reporters where the allegations have not been substantiated by information from another individual (e.g., neighbor, relative, teacher) with firsthand knowledge of the alleged abuse/neglect do not provide sufficient grounds for a court order to interview the children or enter the home when access is denied.

D. Confidentiality and Identity of CA/N Reporters

The identity of persons reporting CA/N allegations shall be kept confidential as provided by Alabama law. All persons contacted and/or interviewed during the CA/N assessment process shall be informed that the reporter's identity is confidential. The reporter's name can only be released according to State law, and may be released if the information is sent to the District Attorney (DA) or a law enforcement agency (LEA), or if the court becomes involved.

E. Notification Of CA/N Allegations

Child welfare staff shall provide notification of CA/N allegations according to the following requirements. Exceptions to the notification methods or timeframes are permitted only when adherence may compromise child safety or the integrity of information being collected. All exceptions shall receive supervisory consultation **and** approval from the Family Services Director and be thoroughly documented.

1. Content

Notifications shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Incidents reported as alleged abuse/neglect;
- Names of children allegedly abused/neglected; and
- Dates/timeframes the incidents are alleged to have occurred.

If the alleged perpetrator is a foster parent, information on the Alabama State Foster Parent Association, its goals of peer support and advocacy, and its toll-free telephone number (1-888-545-2372) must also be included in the notification.

2. Timeframe

Established protocol requires prior notification to Law Enforcement Agency to allow for a joint investigation. This will ensure they have an opportunity to participate in the initial interview should they choose to do so.

District Attorney and/or Law Enforcement Agency must be given the Child Abuse Neglect Reports/Intake information on the same day; after hours, the following day; this should be outlined in the Working Agreement. Information should be provided orally, if possible, and must be given in writing.

Child welfare staff shall provide notification of CA/N allegations, with the knowledge of law enforcement to the Alleged Perpetrator within ten (10) working days of the report's receipt. All others who are due notice of allegations, such as parents, Legal guardians, out-of-home care providers, etc. should receive notice within five (5) working days of the report's receipt. The notification may be mailed (if written) or provided personally (i.e., orally, with documentation in the case file, or by hand delivering the letter) during the initial contact with the following individuals.

Note: In coordination with law enforcement, notification to the alleged perpetrator may need to occur shortly after receipt of the report if the Alleged Perpetrator has access to children which poses an immediate or impending safety risk.

NOTE: The county department's working agreement with law enforcement must be followed provided it is in accordance with the General Policies and Procedures. Refer to General Policies & Procedures beginning on page 3 for policy on working agreements with law enforcement

3. Method

a. Oral Or Written

The following individuals and agencies may be notified orally or in writing.

- Legal Parents, Legal Custodians, And Primary Caregivers

  "Legal parents" includes those who live in the home with the child at the time an incident occurs, and those who were living in the home at the time of a child's removal when the child is currently residing in out-of-home care.

  Non-custodial parents shall be provided notification when that parent and the child have an on-going relationship.

  Notification is not required when parental rights have been terminated.

  "Legal custodians" and "primary caregivers are those individuals (other than legal parents) who are acting in the parental role. If a primary caregiver lives in the home with the legal parent or custodian, both individuals shall receive notification.

- Alleged Perpetrator

  These individuals include any person age fourteen (14) years or older.

  If the individual is approved, licensed, or certified to care for children, refer to the following section, b. Written.

  If the individual is a minor child (i.e., under age 19), the child's legal parents, legal custodian, and primary caregiver shall be notified of the allegations; and if the minor child resides in out-of-home care, the foster care provider must also receive notification.

- United States Department of Defense Advocacy Program

  Per *Code of Alabama 1975 § 26-14-3 as amended (Act 2017-257)*, effective 5/11/17, the Department is to make efforts to determine the military status of the parent or guardian of the child who is subject to the child abuse or neglect allegation in the report, and, if the Department determines that a parent or guardian is in the military, to further require the Department to notify a Department of Defense Family Advocacy Program at the military installation of the parent or guardian of the allegation of child abuse or neglect.

If the CA/N incident occurred in an out-of-home care setting, the following individuals and agencies shall be provided notification.

- Parents of any children in the out-of-home care setting to be interviewed during the CA/N assessment;
- Foster parents when a member of the foster parent's household is alleged to have abused/neglected children in the foster parent's home.
- Administrator of the agency that approves or licenses the out-of-home care setting (the director or board chairman when the alleged perpetrator is the setting's administrator);
- SDHR Office of Adoption when the incident involves a child in DHR permanent custody who has been placed in a non-foster parent adoptive home, the alleged perpetrator is the prospective adoptive parent, and the incident occurred prior to the final decree being issued; and
- Administrator of a private child-placing agency when the incident involves a child independently placed in an adoptive home, and the alleged perpetrator is the prospective adoptive parent, and the incident occurred prior to the final decree being issued.

"Out-of-home care" includes, but is not limited to, the following settings:

- day care and night time centers (exempt and DHR licensed);
- day care and night time homes (family and group);
- foster family homes (regular, related, and therapeutic);institutions and group homes (licensed by DHR, another State agency or a private child-placing agency);
- schools; and
- non-finalized (i.e., final decree not yet issued) adoptive homes.

b. Written

The following individuals **must** be provided written notification of allegations (§ 26-14-7.1) when they have been identified as the alleged perpetrator .

(1) Any person who is approved, licensed, or certified to care for children

(2) Any person who is employed by (i.e., professional, non-professional, contract), serves as a volunteer for, or is connected with (e.g., students completing an educational practicum, board members) any facility, agency, or home which cares for and controls any children

and

that facility is licensed, approved, or certified by the state; operated as a state facility; or is any public, private, or religious facility or agency that may be exempt from licensing procedures.

III. INFORMATION COLLECTION PROTOCOL

Child welfare staff shall use the following protocol to collect information during the CA/N assessment process. It is designed to ensure that a family-centered approach is taken. The protocol begins with a preparation phase and continues through a series of interviews where information is collected to make the necessary CA/N assessment decisions.

A. Supportive Interaction with Individuals Pertinent To The CA/N Assessment
Child welfare staff shall apply a family-centered approach when conducting CA/N assessments. This approach seeks to support and involve children, parents, primary caregivers, and other individuals in all aspects of CPS intervention. Child welfare staff shall make every effort to constructively engage children, parents, and other persons involved with and knowledgeable of the circumstances surrounding the intake information.

B. Preparation

Child welfare staff shall prepare for conducting the CA/N assessment prior to making initial contact with children, their families, and others pertinent to the assessment. Preparation includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Reviewing all information collected during the intake process including DHR case records and CA/N files; and when the situation involves reports and initial child contact after regular business hours, the case records and CA/N files must be reviewed the next working day;

- Contacting reporters, as needed, to clarify vague or inconsistent aspects of the intake information or to obtain additional information needed before making initial contact;

- Considering risks to the children;

- Planning location(s) and order in which interviews will be conducted;

  Consistent with a family-centered approach, it is important to begin information collection, whenever possible, with parents or primary caregivers. Therefore, interview parents or primary caregivers first unless there are indications that child safety or the integrity of the CA/N assessment could be jeopardized.

- Identifying and securing involvement of other needed individuals (e.g., law enforcement, other DHR staff, mental health personnel); and

- Obtaining consultation with a child welfare supervisor as needed.

C. Exceptions To The Information Collection Protocol

Certain case situations may allow an exception to the information collection protocol. After supervisory consultation, the County Director must contact the Family Services Director for approval. This must be documented in the case file. Situations which may allow an exception include, but are not limited to:

- child death is reported, and therefore, staff are unable to interview the child who allegedly experienced abuse/neglect; and

- out-of-home incidents where immediate and extended family members have no responsibility for the alleged abuse/neglect, but do have the protective capacities to assure the child's safety now and in the future (e.g., a 15 year old is raped by someone outside the home; child is inappropriately touched by another child while riding the bus home from school).

D. Safety Assessment of Children

The assessment of safety for children is the primary function of child protective services and is to be assessed throughout the case (from intake to case closure). Refer to the CPS policy tab titled, Safety Assessment, for this policy.

E. Securing Needed Medical Care

Child welfare staff shall take immediate action to obtain medical care for children if needed to confirm abuse/neglect or when injuries require immediate medical treatment (e.g., child's health is jeopardized if injury not treated now), even if doctors' appointment have been scheduled for a later date.

Child welfare staff shall make every effort to help parents/primary caregivers understand the need for medical care and gain their cooperation with accessing it. Child welfare staff shall assist parents/primary caregivers to access medical care, including, if needed, accompanying them to a medical facility.

Child welfare staff may seek a court order to obtain a medical exam or medical care if the parents:

- are unavailable;
- refuse to cooperate or give consent; or
- are in disagreement with an attending physician's recommendations when medical care has been sought, and without continued care, the situation may become life-threatening.

To obtain a court order in these situations, child welfare staff may:

- file a petition requesting a court order which authorizes emergency medical care;
- file a petition for protective supervision which provides DHR the authority to consent to medical care; or
- file a petition for legal temporary custody and request that DHR be given authority to consent to medical treatment.

Note: Refer to *Special CA/N Procedures* for additional information when reports involve medical neglect of children with disabilities under one (1) year of age.

Code of Alabama 1975, § 26-14-6, provides County DHR Directors with authority to give or cause to be given effective consent for the medical treatment for an abused/neglected child when the child is taken into protective custody and prior to the seventy two (72) hour hearing. DHR may grant permission for routine medical or emergency care only. There is no authority under this statute for elective medical treatment without a court order.

If the Department has been granted legal custody of the child through a court order, that order carries with it the authority for ordinary medical care which includes necessary medical treatment and elective preventive medical care (e.g., dental treatment, medical exams). Refer to *General Policies And Procedures* for payment procedures related to medical expenses that are incurred during an CA/N assessment where the children are not in DHR custody.

F. Required Interviews and Information

Sufficiently detailed information shall be collected through interviews, observations, and written materials provided by knowledgeable individuals in order to complete CA/N assessment analysis and decision-making.

1. CA/N Assessment Interviews

Child welfare staff shall conduct interviews with all parents and primary caregivers, children and other adults residing in the home, alleged perpetrators, and collaterals. Workers shall make a home visit every 30 days until the CA/N is completed.

a. Parents And Primary Caregivers

Individual, in-person, private interviews shall be conducted with all parents and primary caregivers (i.e., adult with whom the children live). At the beginning of the interview, child welfare staff shall provide parents and primary caregivers with information regarding:

- child welfare's role;
- the nature of the information received at intake; and
- the purpose of CA/N assessment.

The parents' and primary caregivers' assistance with completing the CA/N assessment shall be sought. Child welfare staff shall also encourage and support parents/primary caregivers to ask questions and

express their concerns about the CA/N assessment process and continued involvement with DHR. Interviews shall focus on obtaining behaviorally specific, detailed information related to the alleged abuse/neglect, and exploring family conditions and circumstances relevant to the allegations.

Child welfare staff shall also be alert to evidence of other safety threats that were unreported or unidentified during the intake process.

Child welfare staff shall provide information about the CA/N assessment's status and anticipated next steps prior to concluding the initial interview with the parents and primary caregivers. The information shall include:

- Concerns about child safety;
- General findings (observations and impressions); and
- A review of any safety plan that has been developed. Refer to section **IV**. A. 3. for additional information on developing safety plans.

When parents or primary caregivers are being criminally investigated based on the incident(s), and law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, or the defense attorney refuses to allow DHR access to conduct the interview, a copy of the parents' or primary caregivers' statement made to law enforcement will suffice for the interview. Any refusal of access shall be documented.

b. Children In The Home

Individual, in-person, private interviews shall be conducted with all children in the home identified as allegedly abused or neglected within the response time designated at intake. "In – Person contact with all other children residing in the home, not identified at risk of being abused/neglected shall be made as soon as the intake and initial child contact warrants, but no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the date the report was received. Non-verbal children must be observed while they are awake.

The number and identity of all children residing in the home shall be verified and documented. The verification source may include, but is not limited to, relatives, neighbors, friends or DHR records. If verification cannot be obtained and all efforts have been exhausted, child welfare staff shall document efforts made, sources contacted, and information reviewed.

(1) Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected

Initial contact with these children is typically based on the concerns expressed at intake. Individual case circumstances will

determine whether or not that contact will be made at the children's current location. For instance, initial contact occasionally occurs at schools where children attend and are located at the time the intake information is received. When it is necessary to interview/observe the children prior to interviewing the parents and primary caregivers, the parents and primary caregivers **must** be promptly contacted to inform them about the report and then interviewed as soon as possible thereafter. Child welfare staff shall provide the parents and primary caregivers with a full explanation about the decision to contact the children prior to their being contacted.

(2) Other Children in the Home

Interviews with other children in the home shall be sufficient to provide an understanding of whether they are also experiencing the alleged abuse/neglect and if they have any information regarding the report.

c. Other Adults In The Home

Individual, in-person, private interviews shall be conducted with all other adults in the home. The purpose of these interviews is to corroborate information provided by individuals previously interviewed and/or obtain additional information regarding the alleged abuse/neglect.

d. Alleged Perpetrators

Individual, in-person, private interviews shall be conducted with all alleged perpetrators. If the person is being criminally investigated based on the incident(s), and law enforcement, the District Attorney's office, or the defense attorney refuses to allow DHR access to the person to conduct the interview, a copy of the statement made to law enforcement will suffice for an in-person interview. Any refusal of access shall be documented.

e. Collaterals

Collaterals are any third party (e.g., friends, neighbors, relatives or professionals) with information about the alleged abuse/neglect and risk of serious harm to the children. Collaterals are contacted to corroborate information provided by individuals previously interviewed and/or obtain additional information about the children.

Child welfare staff shall interview as many collaterals as needed to reach conclusions regarding the alleged abuse/neglect and risk of serious harm. All individuals known to have first-hand knowledge of the allegations

must be contacted. Interviews shall be conducted individually and privately, by telephone or in-person.

2. CA/N Assessment Information

Specific information is needed to make critical judgments about the presence or lack of abuse/neglect. To enable them to make these judgments, child welfare staff shall collect behaviorally specific, detailed information as identified below concerning the alleged abuse/neglect.

a. Alleged Abuse/Neglect

- Specific description of the abuse/neglect – type injury or threats that occurred and to whom
- Severity of the abuse/neglect – frequency, chronicity, and effects (e.g., physical, emotional, behavioral)
- Detailed description of the incident(s)– when (i.e., date, time), where (i.e., location), how it occurred, and whether any instruments (animate or inanimate) were used to threaten the child or inflict the injury; who was present; who was responsible for the abuse/neglect, and whether or not that person has continued access to the children identified as abused/neglected or access to any other children
- Parents'/primary caregivers' explanation of what happened including how the child's injuries occurred
- History and duration of the alleged abuse/neglect – how long the current situation has existed and whether there have been any prior incidents
- Contributing factors and conditions (e.g., substance use; mental disability; domestic violence)

Child welfare staff shall also collect behaviorally specific, detailed information concerning the following matters when needed to determine whether abuse/neglect and a risk of serious harm exists.

b. Parenting Practices

- Parenting style and history
- Appropriateness of parents'/primary caregivers' expectations of child
- Sensitivity to child's needs and limitations

c. Parents'/Primary Caregivers' Functioning

- Physical, behavioral, cognitive, and social
- Life management, communication, and problem solving
- Mental health and substance use
- Social supports and relationships

d. Disciplinary Practices
(i.e., direction-giving; guidance; punishment and reward; teaching practices)

- Parents'/primary caregivers' intentions
- Parents'/primary caregivers' self-control
- Methods, flexibility, and appropriateness, including responsiveness to child's needs

e. **Child Functioning** (all children in the home)

- Physical
- Emotional
- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Social

IV. CA/N ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Child welfare staff shall analyze information collected through interviews, observations, and written materials in order to determine which children and families are in need of on-going services. This analysis and decision-making process involves:

- determining if the children are at risk of serious harm; and
- reaching a disposition for each CA/N allegation and each alleged perpetrator.

Note: Each allegation specific to a child identified at risk (PIR) and alleged perpetrator must be addressed (e.g., an allegation of shaken baby syndrome with an "indicated" disposition for PIR and alleged perpetrator, must also have a

child death disposition of "indicated" for the PIR and alleged perpetrator) when the child death is directly attributable to "indicated" shaken baby syndrome allegation).

A. CA/N Dispositions

Upon completion of the CA/N assessment, a disposition shall be made for (1) each allegation that a child has been allegedly abused/neglected and (2) each alleged perpetrator. Dispositions may differ for the allegation and the alleged perpetrator. **Child welfare staff shall provide detailed documentation that clearly supports how each disposition was reached.**

Dispositional options are:

- indicated,
- not indicated, and
- unable to complete.

"Indicated" and "not indicated" are based on whether "a preponderance of the credible evidence" (e.g., eye witness accounts, worker observations, medical reports, professional evaluations) obtained during the CA/N assessment would lead a child welfare professional to conclude that abuse/neglect did or did not occur.

1. Indicated

A C/AN allegation is considered "indicated" when a preponderance of the credible evidence substantiates that:

- **with respect to a specific child and allegation**, the child was abused/neglected per *CA/N Allegations And Definitions*; and
- **with respect to each alleged perpetrator**, the person was determined to be responsible for the abuse/neglect.

Note: A court finding of abuse/neglect is not required for child welfare staff to conclude that a report is "indicated." However, when a juvenile or criminal court finds that abuse or neglect occurred, that finding serves as presumptive evidence that the report is "indicated".

If DHR's disposition must be changed to "indicated," child welfare staff must provide the person with an opportunity for a CA/N hearing or an administrative record review according to procedures identified in *Due Process*. Once due process procedures have taken place, child welfare staff must ensure that the correct disposition is reflected in the CA/N

Central Registry. If the disposition needs to be changed, refer to sections L. or M. in *Special CA/N Procedures*.

2. Not Indicated

A CA/N allegation is considered "not indicated" when a preponderance of the credible evidence substantiates that:

with respect to a specific child and allegation

(1) the child was not abused/neglected per *CA/N Allegations And Definitions*;

or

(2) sufficient information is not available and cannot be obtained to substantiate the allegation;

and

- **with respect to each alleged perpetrator**

(1) the person was determined to be not responsible for the abuse/neglect

or

(2) sufficient information is not available and cannot be obtained to substantiate the allegation.

3. Unable To Complete

This disposition shall be used **only** when child welfare staff are unable to obtain information needed to complete the CA/N assessment (e.g., family moves and their whereabouts are unknown; report information proves insufficient to locate the family). **Supervisory concurrence is required prior to reaching this disposition.** Every effort shall be made to obtain the needed information or locate the children and their family, and these efforts shall be documented.

B. Threat Of Serious Harm

The decision to provide on-going services to children and families is based upon CA/N assessment findings of whether there is a risk of serious harm to the children. This decision is not based solely on a CA/N disposition.

On-going child protective services may be provided while children are living in their own home or in a non-foster care out-of-home setting. Children shall be removed from their own home only when it is not possible to protect them from imminent serious harm through the provision of services, including the provision of intensive in-home services.

C. No Threat Of Serious Harm

Child welfare shall:

- close the CA/N assessment when there is no threat of serious harm; or
- provide child protective services as a preventive measure on a voluntary basis according to *CPS Prevention* policy when (a) the family is willing to participate in service planning and delivery and (b) the county DHR has sufficient staff and resources to provide these services.

Note: Families have the right to refuse services unless their children's immediate or impending safety needs would be compromised.

When child welfare staff conclude that the provision of on-going services is not appropriate (i.e., there is no threat of serious harm or preventive services are refused, or due to resource limitations, preventive services cannot be provided), documentation shall include identification of any referrals made to community resources.

V. DOCUMENTATION

Child welfare staff shall document CA/N assessments by completing FACTS data entry prior to submission for supervisory review and approval. Refer to FACTS Child Welfare Manual for data entry instructions.

A. Documentation

Documentation shall sufficiently address, at a minimum, the following areas:

- Whether there is a current threat of serious harm and the basis for the conclusion (i.e., information and observations obtained through the information collection protocol);
- Assessment of any present or impending safety threats;
- Any safety plans developed to address identified safety threats;
- CA/N dispositions, notifications, and due process requirements; and
- Submission of CA/N assessments to DAs and LEAs (per section **V.**, C.).

B. Notification Of CA/N Dispositions

Child welfare staff shall provide written notification of final CA/N dispositions to all individuals and agencies that were originally notified about the CA/N allegations. In addition, "mandatory" reporters shall also receive written notification of the disposition.

When dispositions are "indicated" for the alleged perpetrator, the disposition is considered as a preliminary disposition since these individuals are entitled to due process rights. If these individuals waive their due process rights, the preliminary disposition then becomes the final disposition. Otherwise, the final disposition is provided by the administrative hearing officer or SDHR administrative record reviewer.

Child welfare staff shall include due process rights information in the notification letter to alleged perpetrators who have "indicated" dispositions. The following persons have the right to a CA/N hearing.

1. Any person who is approved, licensed, or certified to care for children:

   and

2. Any person who is employed by (i.e., professional, non-professional, contract), serves as a volunteer for, or is connected with (e.g., students completing an educational practicum, board members) any facility, agency or home which cares for and controls any children

   and

   that facility is licensed, approved, or certified by the state; operated as a state facility; or is any public, private, or religious facility or agency that may be exempt from licensing procedures.

All other alleged perpetrators with "indicated" dispositions have the right to an administrative record review. Refer to *Due Process* for CA/N hearing and administrative record review procedures.

Act No. 2004-257 establishes the Foster Parents Bill of Rights (refer to Administrative Letter No. 7109). According to this legislation, a foster parent is entitled to written notification, within five (5) working days, of reaching a "not-indicated" disposition when alleged abuse/neglect occurred in the foster parent's home and the alleged perpetrator is a member of the foster parent's household. Each County Department shall develop a written notification form to be used uniformly within the county. Child welfare staff shall provide this notification as directed and file a copy in the CA/N record.

When dispositions are "not indicated" for the alleged perpetrator, the notification letter shall inform these persons that, upon written request to the State Department of Human Resources, their name can be removed from the CA/N Central Registry if there have been no further CA/N reports and five (5) years have elapsed from the disposition date. Additional information on Central Registry expungement is located in the *Central Registry* section.

Child welfare staff may provide a preliminary notice of disposition to the person's employer or any other person in a position to discover, prevent or protect children prior to an administrative hearing or record review when children are in danger of being abused/neglected (§ 26-14-7.1). Counties that need to provide a preliminary notice of disposition shall contact SDHR Legal for concurrence.

C. District Attorneys' Offices (DAs) and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)

Child welfare staff shall submit a copy of completed CA/N assessments to the appropriate DA and LEA as described in their county's written working agreement.

VI. REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND ASSIGNMENT FOR ON-GOING SERVICES

Child welfare staff shall submit all CA/N assessments for supervisory review and approval.

1. Supervisory Review

Supervisors shall review all CA/N assessments to determine that:

- child welfare staff have complied with the general requirements and information collection protocol;
- any exceptions have received supervisory consultation and approval from the Family Services Director and been adequately documented;
- documented information is pertinent and sufficient to make the required CA/N assessment decisions; and
- notification of CA/N dispositions have been prepared for distribution and due process rights have been initiated.

Note: If any information is lacking, the supervisor shall obtain an explanation and additional documentation from the CA/N assessment worker.

2. Supervisory Approval

Supervisory approval indicates the CA/N assessment has been reviewed, the supervisor concurs with the analysis and decision-making, and appropriate steps are being taken to transition the family's case to on-going services as needed.

3. Assignment For On-Going Services

All counties shall develop local procedures for ensuring that, when a case is opened for on-going services, an ISP is developed within policy timeframes.