

# INTAKE

## A. Definition

Intake is the first stage in the child protective service process. It is the point at which reports are received concerning children who are suspected of being abused or neglected. Intake requires that workers develop specific skills that will enable them to be supportive of the reporter and obtain the information they need to make decisions about how to proceed on a report.

## B. What Intake Involves

1. Gathering sufficient information to enable you to:
  - Identify and locate the child(ren), the parents, or the caregiver;
  - Determine if the report or referral is appropriate for child protective services;
  - Assess the urgency or seriousness of the situation;
  - Understand the relationship, roles, actions, and motives of the reporter.
2. Providing support and encouragement to reporters whether they are third party, anonymous, or self-referrals by:
  - Explaining the goal of child protective services (to protect the child and to strengthen the family);
  - Explaining the importance of reporting;
  - Dealing with the fears and concerns of the reporter;
  - Discussing confidentiality and being honest as to how a reporter's identity might be revealed.

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3. Checking records to determine if the family or child which has been reported is known to this agency or other agencies in the community. This might include:
  - Central registry;
  - Local office files, or office of previous jurisdiction, if family recently moved to area;
  - Hospital or mental health (may require a release signed by parent or caregiver).
4. Handling a crisis situation which may require you to:
  - Calm the caller;
  - Assess the precipitating factors;
  - Determine an appropriate response based on the needs of the child and family being reported.

C. Skills Necessary for Effective Intake

1. Ability to use good communication skills;
2. Ability to select/screen pertinent information;
3. Ability to solicit information and probe for details if necessary;
4. Ability to bring out and deal with anxieties;
5. Ability to convey a non-threatening supportive tone;
6. Ability to use effective listening techniques;
7. Ability to make decisions;
8. Ability to remain calm in emergency situations;
9. Ability to organize information;
10. Ability to request or conduct records search.

D. Decisions Which Are Made at Intake

1. Whether the report is appropriate for child protective services;
2. Whether the report requires immediate emergency response;
3. Whether the reporter has ulterior motives for making the report.