START\_STATUTE8-817.  Initial screening and safety assessment and investigation protocols

A.  The department shall develop, establish and implement initial screening and safety assessment protocols in consultation with the attorney general and statewide with county attorneys, chiefs of police, sheriffs, medical experts, victims' rights advocates, domestic violence victim advocates and mandatory reporters.  Any initial screening and safety assessment model shall be based on an evidence-informed safety assessment model prescribed in section 8‑456 and shall ensure valid and reliable responses.  The department shall establish written policies and procedures to implement the use of the initial screening and safety assessment protocols.

B.  To ensure thorough investigations of those accused of crimes against children, in each county, the county attorney, in cooperation with the sheriff, the chief law enforcement officer for each municipality in the county and the department shall develop, adopt and implement protocols to guide the conduct of investigations of allegations involving criminal conduct. The protocols shall include:

1.  The process for notification of receipt of criminal conduct allegations.

2.  The standards for interdisciplinary investigations of specific types of abuse and neglect, including timely forensic medical evaluations.

3.  The standards for interdisciplinary investigations involving Native American children in compliance with the Indian child welfare act.

4.  Procedures for sharing information and standards for the timely disclosure of information.

5.  Procedures for coordination of screening, response and investigation with other involved professional disciplines and notification of case status and standards for the timely disclosure of related information.

6.  The training required for the involved child safety workers, law enforcement officers and prosecutors to execute the investigation protocols, including forensic interviewing skills.

7.  The process to ensure review of and compliance with the investigation protocols and the reporting of activity under the protocols.

8.  Procedures for annual reports to be transmitted within forty‑five days after the end of each fiscal year independently from each county attorney to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate and a copy of these reports to be provided to the secretary of state.  Each report made pursuant to this paragraph must be independently prepared and submitted without any input from or communication with the other reporting entities. Each report is a public document and shall include:

(a)  The number of criminal conduct allegations investigated and how many of these investigations were conducted jointly pursuant to the investigation protocols established in this subsection.

(b)  Information from each county attorney regarding the number of cases presented for review, the number of persons charged in those cases, the reasons why charges were not pursued and the disposition of these cases.

(c)  The reasons why a joint investigation did not take place.

9.  Procedures for dispute resolution.

C.  The department shall cooperate with the county attorney and the appropriate law enforcement agency pursuant to the investigation protocols adopted in this section.  In instances of criminal conduct against a child, the department shall protect the victim's rights of the children in its custody against harassment, intimidation and abuse, as applicable, pursuant to article II, section 2.1, Constitution of Arizona.

D.  The county attorney and the law enforcement agency shall cooperate with the department pursuant to the investigation protocols adopted in this section. END\_STATUTE