

Senate Engrossed

DCS; intake hotline; multiple reports

State of Arizona  
Senate  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
Second Regular Session  
2026

# SENATE BILL 1172

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 8-455, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 8-455, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to  
3 read:

4 8-455. Centralized intake hotline; purposes; report of  
5 possible crime; DCS report; standardized hotline  
6 assessment tools; access to information; public  
7 awareness; definitions

8 A. The department shall operate and maintain a centralized intake  
9 hotline to protect children by receiving at all times communications  
10 concerning suspected abuse or neglect. If a person communicates suspected  
11 abuse or neglect to a department employee other than through the hotline,  
12 the employee shall refer the person or communication to the hotline.

13 B. The hotline is the first step in the safety assessment and  
14 investigation process and must be operated to:

15 1. Record communications made concerning suspected abuse or  
16 neglect.

17 2. Immediately take steps necessary to identify and locate prior  
18 communications and DCS reports related to the current communication using  
19 the department's data system and the central registry system of this  
20 state.

21 3. Quickly and efficiently provide information to a law enforcement  
22 agency or prepare a DCS report as required by this section.

23 4. Determine the proper initial priority level of investigation  
24 based on the report screening assessment and direct the DCS report to the  
25 appropriate part of the department based on this determination.

26 C. If a communication provides a reason to believe that a criminal  
27 offense has been committed and the communication does not meet the  
28 criteria for a DCS report, the hotline worker shall immediately provide  
29 the information to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

30 D. A hotline worker shall prepare a DCS report if the identity or  
31 current location of the child victim, the child's family or the person  
32 suspected of abuse or neglect is known or can be reasonably ascertained  
33 and all of the following are alleged:

34 1. The suspected conduct would constitute abuse or neglect. If the  
35 suspected conduct involves neglect as defined in section 8-201, paragraph  
36 25, subdivision (c) and a health professional determines that the newborn  
37 infant was exposed prenatally to cannabis as defined in section 13-3401,  
38 the department shall verify whether the mother is a qualifying patient as  
39 defined in section 36-2801 and possesses a valid registry identification  
40 card issued pursuant to section 36-2804.03.

41 2. The suspected victim of the conduct is under eighteen years of  
42 age.

43 3. The suspected victim of the conduct is a resident of or present  
44 in this state.

1           4. The person suspected of committing the abuse or neglect is the  
2 parent, guardian or custodian of the victim or an adult member of the  
3 victim's household.

4           E. A hotline worker shall prepare a DCS report if the identity of  
5 the person who is suspected of abuse is an employee of a child welfare  
6 agency and both of the following apply:

7           1. The child victim is placed with the CHILD WELFARE agency.

8           2. The CHILD WELFARE agency is licensed by and contracted with the  
9 department.

10          F. Except for criminal conduct allegations, the department is not  
11 required to prepare a DCS report if all of the following apply:

12          1. The suspected conduct occurred more than three years before the  
13 communication to the hotline.

14          2. There is no information or indication that a child is currently  
15 being abused or neglected.

16          G. Investigations of DCS reports shall be conducted as provided in  
17 section 8-456 except for investigations containing allegations of criminal  
18 conduct, which shall be conducted as provided in section 8-471.

19          H. The department is not required to prepare a DCS report  
20 concerning alleged abuse or neglect if the alleged act or acts occurred in  
21 a foreign country and the child is in the custody of the federal  
22 government.

23          I. IF THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES FOUR OR MORE REPORTS OF ABUSE OR  
24 NEGLECT IN LESS THAN TWELVE MONTHS REGARDING THE SAME CAREGIVER, THE  
25 OFFICE THAT RECEIVES THE REPORT FOR INVESTIGATION SHALL ASSIGN THE  
26 INVESTIGATION TO A CHILD SAFETY SPECIALIST WHO HAS AT LEAST TWO YEARS'  
27 EXPERIENCE OR, IF AVAILABLE, A CHILD SAFETY SPECIALIST WHO HAS ADVANCED  
28 FORENSIC TRAINING.

29          J. IF THE HOTLINE RECEIVES A CALL THAT ALLEGES THE ABUSE OR NEGLECT  
30 OF A CHILD WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF A DEPENDENCY ACTION PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 8  
31 OF THIS CHAPTER, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DISCLOSE THOSE CALLS TO THE COURT  
32 THAT HAS JURISDICTION OVER THE CHILD'S DEPENDENCY ACTION.

33          K. The department shall develop and train hotline workers to  
34 use standardized hotline assessment tools to determine:

35          1. Whether the suspected conduct constitutes abuse or neglect and  
36 the severity of the suspected abuse or neglect.

37          2. Whether the suspected abuse or neglect involves criminal  
38 conduct, even if the communication does not result in the preparation of a  
39 DCS report.

40          3. The appropriate investigative track for referral based on the  
41 risk to the child's safety.

42          L. A DCS report must include, if available, all of the  
43 following:

44          1. The name, address or contact information for the person making  
45 the communication.

- 1           2. The name, address and other location or contact information for  
2 the parent, guardian or custodian of the child or other adult member of  
3 the child's household who is suspected of committing the abuse or neglect.
- 4           3. The name, address and other location or contact information of  
5 an employee of a child welfare agency who is suspected of committing abuse  
6 if both of the following apply:
- 7           (a) The child victim is placed with the CHILD WELFARE agency.  
8           (b) The CHILD WELFARE agency is licensed by and contracted with the  
9 department.
- 10          4. The name, address and other location or contact information for  
11 the child.
- 12          5. The nature and extent of the indications of the child's abuse or  
13 neglect, including any indication of physical injury.
- 14          6. Any information regarding possible prior abuse or neglect,  
15 including reference to any communication or DCS report involving the  
16 child, the child's siblings or the person suspected of committing the  
17 abuse or neglect.
- 18          ~~K.~~ M. Information gathered through the hotline must be made  
19 available to an employee of the department in order to perform the  
20 employee's duties. The office of child welfare investigations and the  
21 inspections bureau must have immediate access to all records of the  
22 hotline.
- 23          ~~L.~~ N. A representative of the:
- 24            1. Office of child welfare investigations must be embedded in the  
25 hotline to carry out the purposes of section 8-471.
- 26            2. Inspections bureau must be embedded in the hotline to carry out  
27 the purposes of section 8-458.
- 28          ~~M.~~ O. The department shall publicize the availability and the  
29 purposes of the centralized intake hotline.
- 30          ~~N.~~ P. For the purposes of this section:
- 31            1. "Centralized intake hotline" OR "HOTLINE" means the system  
32 developed pursuant to this section regardless of the communication methods  
33 or technologies used to implement the system.
- 34            2. "Criminal offense" means an allegation of conduct against a  
35 child by a person other than a parent, guardian or custodian of the child  
36 victim or another adult member of the child's household that, if true,  
37 would constitute a felony offense.