

REFERENCE TITLE: DCS; intake hotline: case history

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

SB 1174

Introduced by
Senators Werner: Angius; Representatives Aguilar, Gress

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 5. QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY SHOW IN A SINGLE REPORT THE ENTIRE
27 HISTORY OF A CHILD AND THAT CHILD'S SIBLINGS WHO HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF
28 PRIOR HOTLINE CALLS OR DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATIONS. THE HOTLINE WORKER
29 SHALL REVIEW THE NARRATIVE OF EVERY CALL RECEIVED FOR THAT CHILD FROM THE
30 PREVIOUS SIXTY DAYS.

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

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

39 1. The suspected conduct would constitute abuse or neglect. If the
40 suspected conduct involves neglect as defined in section 8-201, paragraph
41 25, subdivision (c) and a health professional determines that the newborn
42 infant was exposed prenatally to cannabis as defined in section 13-3401,
43 the department shall verify whether the mother is a qualifying patient as
44 defined in section 36-2801 and possesses a valid registry identification
45 card issued pursuant to section 36-2804.03.

- 1 2. The suspected victim of the conduct is under eighteen years of
2 age.
- 3 3. The suspected victim of the conduct is a resident of or present
4 in this state.
- 5 4. The person suspected of committing the abuse or neglect is the
6 parent, guardian or custodian of the victim or an adult member of the
7 victim's household.
- 8 E. A hotline worker shall prepare a DCS report if the identity of
9 the person who is suspected of abuse is an employee of a child welfare
10 agency and both of the following apply:
- 11 1. The child victim is placed with the **CHILD WELFARE** agency.
12 2. The **CHILD WELFARE** agency is licensed by and contracted with the
13 department.
- 14 **F. A HOTLINE WORKER SHALL REVIEW CALLS TO THE HOTLINE THAT WERE
15 RECEIVED IN THE PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS AND THAT DID NOT MEET THE CRITERIA
16 FOR A DCS REPORT AND MAY USE THE INFORMATION THAT IS CONTAINED IN PRIOR
17 HOTLINE CALLS WHEN MAKING A DETERMINATION IF AN ALLEGATION MEETS THE
18 CRITERIA FOR A DCS REPORT.**
- 19 ~~F.~~ G. Except for criminal conduct allegations, the department is
20 not required to prepare a DCS report if all of the following apply:
- 21 1. The suspected conduct occurred more than three years before the
22 communication to the hotline.
- 23 2. There is no information or indication that a child is currently
24 being abused or neglected.
- 25 ~~G.~~ H. Investigations of DCS reports shall be conducted as provided
26 in section 8-456 except for investigations containing allegations of
27 criminal conduct, which shall be conducted as provided in section 8-471.
- 28 ~~H.~~ I. The department is not required to prepare a DCS report
29 concerning alleged abuse or neglect if the alleged act or acts occurred in
30 a foreign country and the child is in the custody of the federal
31 government.
- 32 ~~I.~~ J. The department shall develop and train hotline workers to
33 use standardized hotline assessment tools to determine:
- 34 1. Whether the suspected conduct constitutes abuse or neglect and
35 the severity of the suspected abuse or neglect.
- 36 2. Whether the suspected abuse or neglect involves criminal
37 conduct, even if the communication does not result in the preparation of a
38 DCS report.
- 39 3. The appropriate investigative track for referral based on the
40 risk to the child's safety.
- 41 ~~J.~~ K. A DCS report must include, if available, all of the
42 following:
- 43 1. The name, address or contact information for the person making
44 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.~~ L. 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.~~ M. 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.~~ N. The department shall publicize the availability and the
29 purposes of the centralized intake hotline.

30 ~~N.~~ O. For the purposes of this section:

31 1. "Centralized intake hotline" means the system developed pursuant
32 to this section regardless of the communication methods or technologies
33 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.

38 Sec. 2. Effective date

39 Section 8-455, Arizona Revised Statutes, as amended by this act, is
40 effective from and after December 31, 2026.