

# Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Current as of February 2014

Terms in blue ink (that are not hyperlinked) are defined in Glossary

## CYF 002 –Initial Reports and CYF Response

Initial reports of allegations of child or student abuse can be made to Pennsylvania’s ChildLine and Abuse Registry, known commonly as “ChildLine” Intake Unit or directly to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Children, Youth and Families’ (CYF) Intake/Call Screening Department.

### Pennsylvania ChildLine and Abuse Registry (ChildLine)

The Pennsylvania ChildLine and Abuse Registry’s Intake Unit accepts reports for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 24 hours a day. ChildLine staff provides information to callers and assigns reports of child and student abuse to county children and youth agencies for investigation, assessment, and child protective services.

ChildLine may also refer allegations to county children and youth agencies for further assessment and (general) protective services when children seem to be at risk of abuse, but allegations are not as severe. When allegations appear to meet Pennsylvania’s legal definition of [child abuse](#), ChildLine will assign a unique number to the report and track the outcome of the investigation. Depending on the nature of the allegations, ChildLine may also forward reports directly to law enforcement, or refer the caller to local social services (such as counseling, financial aid and legal services).

Pennsylvania ChildLine and Abuse Registry  
Hillcrest, 2<sup>nd</sup> fl  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675

(717) 783-1964 (Administrative Offices) or **To Report Suspected Abuse 1-800-932-0313**

<http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/provider/childwelfareservices/childlineandabuseregistry/index.htm>

### DHS CYF Intake/Call Screening

In accordance with Pennsylvania’s Child Protective Services Law (CPSL), the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth, and Families Intake/Call Screening Department will accept reports (calls, walk-in, etc.) 24 hours a day from any person. Reports can come from many sources including: [mandated reporters](#); the general public; anonymous callers; a physician; a hospital or law enforcement organization that has taken protective custody of a child; and ChildLine.

Callers may receive information and referrals to other agencies and jurisdictions, law enforcement officials, local social services, and/or may be assigned to a CYF caseworker for further Child Protective Service (CPS) investigation and/or General Protective Service (GPS) assessment. If a report meets legally-defined criteria for child abuse, and the call did not originate from ChildLine, CYF will open the investigation and contact ChildLine to register the report.

Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
Office of Children, Youth, and Families  
400 N. Lexington Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15208

**412-473-2000** *CYF does not log telephone numbers from anonymous callers and will accept calls from call-blocked telephone numbers (as when people dial \*67, etc.)*

<http://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Offices/Children,-Youth-and-Families.aspx>

## Initial Response: Call Screening/Field Screening

When CYF receives a report, the Call Screener:

- Gathers information and documents all reports that come to the attention of the agency;
- Inquires about all children living in the household and related children (regardless of residence); and
- Makes recommendations to the Call Screening Supervisor about whether and when to assign cases to Casework Staff.

The Call Screening Supervisor:

- Reviews incoming reports and any available DHS and CYF record(s);
- Rates initial level of risk;
- Determines whether a field screening is warranted; and
- Screens out the report; or
- Assigns a response time, unit, and caseworker as necessary.

### Screening out calls

All referrals, reports and requests for service will result in an assessment from CYF unless the Call Screener, in consultation with the Call Screening Supervisor, clearly establishes that:

- CYF does not have legal jurisdiction in the matter;
- There are no reasons for CYF to conduct a field assessment;
- There are no service needs appropriate for CYF to address; or
- Another agency or provider can meet the family's needs and Call Screeners have provided resource information to the caller.

When family members reside in Allegheny County and a report raises significant concerns for the child's immediate safety, or if a child/ren is believed to be at imminent risk of harm, a DHS CYF caseworker is dispatched within two hours.

### Field Screening

A [Field Screening](#) may be assigned as an extension of call screening to conduct a face-to-face assessment of the safety of the children to determine whether there is need for Child Protective Service (CPS) Investigation and/or General Protective Service (GPS) Assessment and services.

### CYF Intake Assignments

The Call screening supervisor may assign a caseworker to a family as either a Child Protective Service (CPS) or General Protective Service (GPS) 'referral' with or without a Field Screening.

- A Child Protective Service (CPS) Investigation is assigned to a CPS caseworker when ChildLine has assigned a registry number because the allegations appear to meet the Child Protective Service Law (CPSL) definition of child or student abuse; OR
- A General Protective Service (GPS) Assessment is assigned to caseworkers when there is no ChildLine registry number (*though all CPS Investigations also require GPS assessments*).