



## Snyder County Children and Youth Services

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### **Your Rights As A Client**

All clients of the Agency, regardless of the reason for their involvement, are entitled to professional, confidential services. Clients have the right to be treated in a respectful manner and provided service without prejudice. No information regarding the family may be released to anyone without a signed release of information form. In certain circumstances, Agency staff persons are required to make reports to law enforcement officials, other County Children and Youth Agencies, the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, and ChildLine. These reports may be made without the family's consent.

The Agency must notify the family in writing within 7 days of the Agency's decision to accept their family for service or close their case or assessment.

Clients whose family has been accepted for services with the Agency or who are the subject of a child abuse investigation have additional rights.

### **Client Rights - Protective Services**

#### NOTIFICATIONS

The Agency must notify the family in writing within 7 days of the Agency's decision to accept their family for services. This notification must include the Agency's reason for accepting the family for services.

#### RIGHTS REGARDING THE FAMILY SERVICE PLAN

For all families who have been accepted for services, the Agency must develop a Family Service Plan. The Family Service Plan should clearly outline the areas of concern that support the Agency's continued involvement and define the timelines within which specific solutions should be met. The family has the right to participate in the development of this Family Service Plan. All family members 14 years of age and older shall be given the opportunity to sign the Family Service Plan, signifying their compliance. The family shall receive a copy of the Family Service Plan upon its completion.

## RIGHT TO APPEAL

The custodial parent or primary person responsible for the care of a child receiving services from the Agency has the right to appeal the Agency's decision that the child is in need of General Protective Services. Appeals may be made to the Agency in writing.

## **What Are My Rights In An Investigation?**

### NOTIFICATIONS

The Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and Department of Public Welfare regulations require the County Children and Youth Agency to notify all subjects in a report of suspected child abuse about the following:

- The existence of the report
- The nature of the allegations
- Their right to receive a copy of the report
- Their legal rights
- The possible impact of a confirmed report on future employment
- The social services available to protect children.

Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Agency must notify all subjects of the report of the Agency's decision as to whether abuse or neglect has occurred. This notification must be made in writing.

### MAINTENANCE OF INFORMATION RELATED TO ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

There are three potential outcomes to an investigation of child abuse or neglect: unfounded, indicated, or founded. An unfounded report is a report in which the County Agency determines that the child was not abused, although significant concern for the child's safety may remain. All identifying information in an unfounded report must be destroyed within 1 year and 120 days of the decision to unfound the report. However, this information may be retained if the family is accepted for services with the Agency. An indicated report is a report in which the county agency determines that the child was abused. A founded report is a report in which a court determines that the child was abused. Information in indicated and founded reports will remain on file until the abused child reaches 23 years of age. Identifying information on perpetrators in indicated and founded reports will be kept on file indefinitely.

## RIGHT TO APPEAL

The alleged perpetrator in an indicated report may appeal the Agency's decision to indicate the report by contacting the Secretary of the Department of Public Welfare.

## RIGHT TO RECEIVE COPY OF REPORTS

Subjects of a child abuse investigation may receive a copy of ChildLine reports relating to the investigation by writing to the County Agency or ChildLine Abuse and Registry. However, identifying information regarding the individual who made the report and any individuals who may have cooperated with the investigation will not be released.

## RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY

Subjects of a child abuse investigation have the right to consult with an attorney at any time during the investigation.

## EFFECTS OF AN ABUSE INVESTIGATION ON EMPLOYMENT

An indicated or founded report of child abuse may affect the future employment of the perpetrator in a childcare service. A person responsible for the abuse in a founded report may not be employed in any childcare service, public or private school, or be a foster or adoptive parent within 5 years of when the abuse was committed. Further, persons convicted of certain crimes related to child abuse may never be employed in any childcare service, public or private school, or be a foster or adoptive parent.