



## What's in Social Services' Child Abuse records?

Social Services' Child Abuse records contain information about the services provided to a child. The records are used to:

- organize information gathered about the child
- plan services for the child
- provide a person with information about the services they received as a child

The focus of the record is the child. Adults are referred to in the record only as they relate to the child and the services provided. The record is not written with the intent that it might be used to screen an adult for a position working with children.

## Who can get the information?

Child Abuse records are confidential and information must not be released except for the purposes set out in *The Child and Family Services Act*. The Act allows Social Services to give information to someone for the purpose of providing services to the child. This would be someone like a teacher, doctor, psychologist or foster parent.

Section 74(3) of *The Child and Family Services Act* allows for the Minister of Social Services to authorize the release of information about an individual to that individual. Information relating to other persons cannot be released.

## What about records checks for job applicants?

Some organizations require information from a child abuse record before allowing an employee or volunteer to work with children. Social Services will complete a check for the person, however since these records are not written for this purpose, the information provided might not be very useful.

To ask for a check, the requestor fills out a Child Abuse Record Check. By signing the form, the person states, "Because I will be providing services to children, I want to know about any record of me being involved with Social Services which indicates that I might have caused a child to be in need of protection".

**The requestor should call the the Ministry of Social Services office where they live to find out how to have a check completed in their area. They need to provide identification to prove they are the person named on the form. For example, you should have identification that includes your birth date and signature.**

Social Services states on the form whether its records indicate that the person might have caused a child to be in need of protection and returns the completed form to the person. Then the person decides whether to give the information to the organization.

## What should organizations know about checks?

If your organization is considering requiring prospective employees or volunteers to obtain a child abuse record check:

- You must realize that the records are not intended for screening purposes and might not provide information very useful for that purpose. For instance:
  - Under The Child and Family Services Act, a child might need protective services for reasons other than abuse. A person might request services to assist their family and a record would be created but the child was not in need of protection.

## What should organizations know about checks? (Cont'd)

- The record might indicate that a person with the same name and unknown birth date might have placed a child in need of protection. Therefore, it is not possible to tell whether the applicant is the person in the record.
- The staff member who reads the record might infer that the person might have placed a child in need of protection when the writer of the record did not intend to imply that.

- Social Services might have received several complaints about the person but never found any evidence that a child needed protection. Therefore, the callers had serious concerns but Social Services found nothing to indicate on the record that the person might have placed a child in need of protection.

Social Services has records for Saskatchewan only so

- the records do not provide information if the person placed a child in need of protection in another province or country.

The person might have been a victim of

- circumstances and had little choice at the time other than to place the child in need of protection.

- You should not use the information on the form as the sole reason to refuse a position but only as an indicator of areas to explore in your screening process. You should verify any problematic information by other contacts and consider it in the context of:

- the type of position the person is applying for
- when the problem occurred
- how the problem was resolved
- what happened since the problem.

- If you make it a blanket policy to refuse any applicant whose form states they might have caused a child to need protection:
  - You are unfair to an applicant who has worked to resolve their issues and to make changes in their life.

## How can I find out more?

For more information about child welfare checks, contact the local Ministry of Social Services office in your area.