



Department of
HUMAN SERVICES

***Child Abuse Registry
Annual Report***

June 2022

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Executive Summary:

Iowa Code 235A.14 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to organize and staff a central registry for child abuse information.

Iowa Code 235A.23 requires the DHS to issue an annual report on the central registry regarding its administrative operation and data relevant to child abuse information.

In previous years, the Child Abuse Registry Annual Report has been completed at the end of each calendar year for the data from the previous year. In effort to align this report with other legislative reports completed at the end of each fiscal year, this year's report will include data from calendar years 2020 and 2021.

Introduction:

In accordance with Iowa Code 235A.23, the DHS shall issue an annual report on its administrative operation, including information as to the number of requests for child abuse data, the proportion of requests attributable to each type of authorized access, the frequency and nature of irregularities, and other pertinent matters.

Overview:

The Central Abuse Registry is an electronic database used to store report data and disposition data, in accordance with Iowa Code section 232.71D, relating to a particular case of alleged child abuse which has been determined to be founded (confirmed and placed on the registry). This database is part of the Statewide Tracking of Assessment Reports (STAR) system, which was converted on January 1, 2014 into a web-based application within the Child Welfare Information System, referred to as JARVIS, which stands for Joining Applications and Reports from Various Information Systems. The DHS maintains the Registry at central administrative offices in Des Moines, Iowa.

The DHS collects, maintains, and disseminates child abuse information from the Registry as provided in Iowa Code chapter 235A. The Registry contains report data and disposition data, which includes the names of child abuse victims and the names of persons responsible for the child abuse and links these names to the type of abuse identified in the Child Protective Assessment report.

The existence of the Registry is imperative for the protection of victims and potential victims of child abuse by serving as a single, statewide source of child abuse data. This data is also used to facilitate research on child abuse and as an employment-screening tool for authorized employers and licensing boards. Iowa Code sections 135C.33 and 235A.15 define who has authorized access to the child abuse data listed on the Registry.

As a central, front door component of the Registry, the DHS maintains a toll-free telephone line (1-800-362-2178), which is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. The DHS staff and all other persons may use this line to report cases of suspected child abuse.

Upon receipt of a report of suspected child abuse, the records of the Registry are searched to determine if the records reveal any previous report of child abuse involving the same child, or any other child in the same family, or the person alleged responsible, or other pertinent information with respect to those individuals. This information is provided to the appropriate DHS personnel and law enforcement if applicable.

History and Law Changes Impacting Child Abuse:

1989 through 1995

The Automated Child Abuse and Neglect (ACAN) system was used to store only Registry data (founded child abuse reports) for all Child Abuse Investigations prior to the full implementation of STAR in 1997.

August 1996

The STAR system was developed to store all child abuse data. Prior to this time, 19 counties had implemented Child Protective Assessments (replacing Child Abuse Investigations) and entered child abuse data into Starbase, Starbase was an interim data base system utilized from December 1995 to August 1996.

On August 19, 1996, the remaining counties also began implementing Child Protective Assessments and entering child abuse data in the STAR system.

July 1997

The ACAN system was no longer used for new Child Abuse Intakes after June 30, 1997. The ACAN system continued to be utilized for child abuse record checks for incidents prior to July 1, 1997.

Child abuse data for all incidents reported statewide, with an intake date of July 1, 1997, or later, were entered in the STAR system.

Child Protective Assessments were fully implemented statewide during fiscal year 1998 (July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998). Polk County was the exception, postponing implementation until September 1998. Child Protective Assessments eliminated the use of Child Abuse Investigations and drastically changed the DHS approach to allegations of child abuse by creating a more positive and strength-based approach to working with families.

Iowa Code amendments in 1997 resulted in a differentiation of findings or outcomes of Child Protective Assessments and a determination made as to whether the incident would be placed on the Registry. This resulted in a significant change in the maintenance of case records, authorized access, and dissemination procedures. Cases where the abuse was not confirmed and cases where abuse was confirmed but not placed on the Registry were not maintained on the Registry. Rather, these cases were maintained at the local county offices and collectively within the STAR system.

July 1999

STAR programming had not been completed for the production of cumulative statewide reports on all data elements as reported on the A-4 report produced from ACAN data for the past decade. The five regions were providing monthly STAR data to the program manager for data needs until STAR reports were fully available.

July 2000

STAR data became accessible as a test site on the DATA Warehouse link.

July 2005

Child abuse data became available on the DHS website, currently located at: <https://dhs.iowa.gov/reports/child-abuse-statistics>

July 2011

Iowa Acts 2011, chapter 28/House File 562:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to add medical or mental health treatment, and supervision and modified the standard for failure to provide adequate supervision to mean “the person failed to provide proper supervision of a child that a reasonable and prudent person would exercise under similar facts and circumstances and the failure resulted in direct harm or created a risk of harm to the child.”
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to clarify that “child abuse” or “abuse” shall not be construed to hold a victim responsible for failing to prevent a crime against the victim.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.71D to restrict the name of an alleged perpetrator of sexual abuse who is age thirteen or younger from being placed on the central abuse registry and with a court order finding good cause, to restrict the name of an alleged perpetrator of sexual abuse who is age fourteen through seventeen from being placed on the central abuse registry.
- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.19 to change the timeframe to appeal a child abuse report from six months to ninety days.
- Directed the DHS to continue work to ensure the due process rights of a person alleged to have committed child abuse are addressed in a timelier manner while also ensuring that children are protected from abuse. As a result, the following actions were put into place:

- The DHS director agreed to add a staff position to process appeals from the proposed administrative law judge decisions filed and taken by the DHS to the director.
- The Attorney General's Office and the Department of Inspections and Appeals implemented procedure to expedite appeals in cases where employment is at risk, offering the parties the opportunity to have an appeal heard as quickly as six weeks after notification of the appeal.
- The Attorney General's Office agreed to temporarily shift resources to add additional assistant attorneys if necessary to prevent back logs and delays in expedited appeals (those having employment implications).

July 2012

Iowa Acts 2012, chapter 1082/House File 2226:

- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.19 to require that any proposed decisions made after July 1, 2012, will be the final decision after 45 days if there is not a final decision made prior to that time.
- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.18 to require that a person named on the Registry as having abused a child shall have their name removed from the Registry if that person has not had another founded subsequent report within the ten-year period.
- Directed the DHS to provide recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the length of time a person named in a child abuse report as having abused a child should remain on the registry and the circumstances under which the DHS may remove the name of a person named in the report as having abused a child from the report and disposition data prior to the expiration of a ten-year period.
- Charged the DHS with completing a comprehensive review to determine whether to recommend implementation of a differential response to child abuse reports. Upon implementation, a differential response system would ultimately decrease the number of persons listed on the Registry for less serious types of abuse.

January 2014

Iowa Acts 2013, chapter 115/House File 590:

- Amended Iowa Code chapter 232 to implement a differential response system to include two discrete pathways to respond to accepted reports of child abuse. The child abuse assessment pathway requires a determination of abuse and a determination of whether criteria for placement on the Registry are met. The family assessment pathway identifies the families' strengths and needs, connects the family to the appropriate services needed, and does not include a determination of abuse or a determination of whether criteria for placement on the Registry are met. The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) also support the use of Differential Response Systems.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.71D to require the child abuse information from a confirmed report of abuse to be placed in the Registry as a case of founded

child abuse if the person responsible has a previous confirmed or founded case within the previous 5 years.

- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.18 to require a person's name to be removed from the Registry after 5 years if that person committed physical abuse, denial of critical care (DCC), or presence of illegal drugs in a child's body (PIDS) and the child abuse did not result in the child's death or serious injury and that person has no further abuse within that 5-year period.

July 2016

Iowa Acts 2016, chapter 1063/Senate File 2258:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 232.2, 232.58, 232.68, 232.70, 232.71B, 232.102, 232.104, 232.127, 232.183, 237.1, and 237.14A to:
 - Implement federal requirements from the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183) which required:
 - Efforts to combat Human Trafficking
 - Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard for Foster Care
 - Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement for only those 16+
 - Transition Planning for 14+
 - Implement federal requirements from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22, an amendment to the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act), which required:
 - Child Sex Trafficking to be a new type of child abuse
 - Workers to identify, assess, and provide services for victims of sex trafficking
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to modify the child abuse definition of sexual abuse to include a perpetrator as any person who resides in a home with the child.
- Directed a stakeholder workgroup be established to address Drug Endangered Children.

July 2017

Iowa Acts 2017, chapter 86/House File 543:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.2 to modify the definition of child in need of assistance to include cocaine, heroin, and other synthetic opioids to the list of dangerous substances for which a child could be adjudicated as a child in need of assistance.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to expand the child abuse category "Manufacturing/Possession of a Dangerous Substance with intent to manufacture" now referred to as "Dangerous Substance" to include cocaine, heroin, and other synthetic opioids to the list of dangerous substances for which a Child Abuse Assessment is required to be assigned, rather than a Family Assessment.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.77 to require healthcare providers involved in the delivery or care of an infant affected by any substance abuse or withdrawal

symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, to notify the Iowa DHS.

Iowa Acts 2017, chapter 117 /House File 526:

- Amended Iowa Code section 709.21 to modify the definition of Invasion of Privacy-Nudity (sub-category of Sexual Abuse) reflecting that a person no longer has to have knowledge of being viewed, photographed, or filmed to meet the definition.

July 2018

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1165/Senate File 2418:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to:
 - Modify the child abuse definition of Sexual Abuse to apply to a caretaker or a person who is 14 years or older and resides in a home with the child.
 - Modify the child abuse definition of Allows Access by a Registered Sex Offender and clarify exceptions.
- Established a Mandatory Reporter Workgroup to make recommendations relating to mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse reporter training and certification requirements.

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1050/Senate File 360:

- Amended Iowa Code section 233, the Newborn Infant Custody Release Procedures (Newborn Safe Haven Act), to:
 - Allow parents to release a newborn infant up to 30 days of age.
 - Allow parents to utilize 911 to relinquish physical custody to a first responder and provide for confidentiality of any transcripts of recording.
 - Provide direction for the first responder to:
 - Perform any reasonable acts necessary to protect the physical health or safety of the newborn infant.
 - Transport the newborn to the nearest institutional health facility.
 - Provide any parent identification or medical history information to the institutional health facility.
 - Notify the Department of Human Services of the newborn released under the Act.
 - Require the first responder who assumes custody of a newborn be provided notice of any hearing held concerning the newborn and may provide testimony.

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1137/House File 2445:

- Amended Iowa Code to repeal section 232.80, which required Homemaker Home Health Aide Services to be provided prior to removal of a child.

- These services have not been available since 2005 when the current service array was established yet some courts were still upholding this reasonable effort standard since the requirement had not been removed from the law.

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1113/House File 2444:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.69 to add an employee, owner, operator, or other person who performs duties for a Children's Residential Facility as a mandatory reporter.

July 2019

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 114/House File 224:

- Amended Iowa Code section 709.14 to expand the definition for the sexual abuse sub-category, lascivious conduct with a minor.

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 47/Senate File 346:

- Amended Iowa Code section 708.16 to add female genital mutilation (also known as FGM, female genital cutting, and female circumcision) to the criminal code, requires the Crime Victim Assistance Division of the Office of the Attorney General to initiate an educational campaign to create awareness, and requires the University of Iowa hospitals and clinics to develop educational programming, including protocols for physicians to provide safe health care and treatment for victims of FGM.

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 125/House File 642:

- Amended Iowa Code section 217.30 to provide for the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to share confidential information outside of the 20-day child abuse assessment period with the Central Iowa Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Multi-Disciplinary Team (CICSEC MDT).
 - This CICSEC MDT exists to identify services for children who are victims of, and children at risk of becoming victims of, human trafficking.
 - This CICSEC MDT currently operates in Polk County.
 - This CICSEC MDT is the only MDT that meets the legal requirements to share confidential information outside of the 20-day assessment period.
 - All other DHS MDTs with valid MDT Agreements are bound by Iowa Code chapter 235A and Iowa Administrative Code section 441-175.36.

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 91/House File 731:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 232.69 and 235B.16 to modify mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse reporter training requirements as follows.
 - Removed the Iowa Department of Public Health's responsibility to review and approve mandatory reporter training curricula.

- Required the DHS to develop and provide the core training curriculum, including the initial training as well as the additional training, for all mandatory reporters in Iowa.
- Allowed for an employer to provide supplemental training as it relates to their professional practice, in addition to the core training curriculum provided by the DHS.
- Maintained that every mandatory reporter must complete two hours of training within six months of employment or self-employment but required additional training every three years (as opposed to every five years).
 - The child and dependent adult abuse trainings can no longer be combined into one two-hour course. Both the child and dependent adult abuse core trainings are two hours each.
 - All mandatory reporters are required to take the initial two-hour training once but will be allowed to take a one-hour recertification training (also provided by the DHS) every three years thereafter so long as they do so prior to the three-year expiration period.
- Clarified that all valid mandatory reporter training certificates issued prior to July 1, 2019, remain effective for five-years.
- Additional relevant information:
 - The initial 2-hour trainings are hosted on the DHS Learning Management System, linked on the DHS website, and available by July 1, 2019.
 - The additional 1-hour recertification trainings are available by July 1, 2022.
 - The trainings are free.
 - The trainings are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - Pre and post tests are required to ensure competencies are attained.
 - Upon completion of the training, a certificate of completion will be available to the participant.
- See the DHS mandatory reporter webpage for more information: <https://dhs.iowa.gov/child-welfare/mandatoryreporter>

The Family First Prevention Services Act (as part of Division E in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, with implementation dates in 2019)/H.R. 1892:

- Amended federal law to:
 - Support prevention services.
 - The law gives states and tribes the ability to target their existing federal resources into an array of prevention and early intervention services to keep children safe, strengthen families and reduce the need for foster care whenever it is safe to do so.

- Provide support for kinship (relative) caregivers.
 - Provides federal funds for evidence-based Kinship Navigator programs that link relative caregivers to a broad range of services and supports to help children remain safely with them and requiring states to document how their foster care licensing standards accommodate relative caregivers.
- Establishes requirements for placement in residential treatment programs and improves quality and oversight of services.
 - Allows federal reimbursement for care in certain residential treatment programs for children with emotional and behavioral disturbance requiring special treatment
- Improves services to older youth.
 - Allows states to offer services to youth who have aged out of foster care up to age 23, along with adding flexibility to the Education & Training Voucher (ETV) program.

July 2021

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 40/House File 260:

- Amended Iowa Code section 237A.1 to define “child care home” and “child development home” as follows:

6. “Child care home” means a person or program providing child care to any of the following children at any one time that is not registered to provide child care under this chapter, as authorized under section 237A.3:

a. Five or fewer children.

b. Six or fewer children, if at least one of the children is school-aged.

7. “Child development home” means a person or program registered under section 237A.3A that may provide child care to seven or more children at any one time.

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 123/House File 452:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 152C.5B, 152C.5C, 157.4A, 157.4B, and 710A to create four new sections relating to certain civil and criminal enforcement activities involving the practice of massage therapy and cosmetology to discourage activities involved in human trafficking and amends human trafficking laws to align with these new sections.

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 78/House File 710:

- Amended Iowa Code section 726.6 to allow for a sex offender to be criminally charged with child endangerment if he or she has control of or unsupervised contact with a minor who is not the sex offender’s child or step-child.

- This amendment did not change DHS practice as child abuse laws already address this situation and applies the same exceptions, under child abuse allegations of Allows Access to a Registered Sex offender.

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 161/House File 743:

- Amended Iowa Code section 13B.9 to provide that where the public defender has provided representation in a Chapter 232 proceeding which has ended in termination of parental rights (TPR), the “local public defender office shall represent in a subsequent adoption proceeding any indigent party who files an adoption proceeding pursuant to section 600.3 to adopt” the child who was subject to the TPR action. If a conflict arises, the public defender’s office is to fund outside representation by a contracted attorney.

Iowa Acts 2021/Senate File 253:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 692A.102, 709.3, and 709.4 to define “sexual abuse in the second degree” and “sexual abuse in the third degree” as follows:

709.3 Sexual abuse in the second degree.

1. A person commits sexual abuse in the second degree when the person commits sexual abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- a. During the commission of sexual abuse the person displays in a threatening manner a dangerous weapon or uses or threatens to use force creating a substantial risk of death or serious injury to any person.*
- b. The other person is a child.*
- c. The person is aided or abetted by one or more persons and the sex act is committed by force or against the will of the other person against whom the sex act is committed.*

2. Sexual abuse in the second degree is a class “B” felony.

709.4 Sexual abuse in the third degree.

1. A person commits sexual abuse in the third degree when the person performs a sex act under any of the following circumstances:

- a. The act is done by force or against the will of the other person, whether or not the other person is the person’s spouse or is cohabiting with the person.*
- b. The act is between persons who are not at the time cohabiting as husband and wife and if any of the following are true:*

(1) The other person is suffering from a mental defect or incapacity which precludes giving consent.

(2) The other person is fourteen or fifteen years of age and any of the following are true:

- (a) The person is a member of the same household as the other person.*
- (b) The person is related to the other person by blood or affinity to the fourth degree.*
- (c) The person is in a position of authority over the other person and uses that authority to coerce the other person to submit.*
- (d) The person is four or more years older than the other person.*

c. The act is performed while the other person is under the influence of a controlled substance, which may include but is not limited to flunitrazepam, and all of the following are true:

(1) The controlled substance, which may include but is not limited to flunitrazepam, prevents the other person from consenting to the act.

(2) The person performing the act knows or reasonably should have known that the other person was under the influence of the controlled substance, which may include but is not limited to flunitrazepam.

d. The act is performed while the other person is mentally incapacitated, physically incapacitated, or physically helpless.

2. Sexual abuse in the third degree is a class "C" felony.

Child Abuse Record Checks:

In accordance with Iowa Code, the DHS processes Registry requests for child abuse background checks for employers, licensing, registration, and certification as well as other state child welfare agencies. In addition, the DHS completes background checks for the general public with signed authorization of the individual being checked. In 2020, the DHS manually processed a total of 47,760 Registry requests and authorizations for child abuse information. In 2021, that total was 46,254.

In addition to Registry requests that are manually processed, authorized employers have access to the Single Contact Repository (SING) application to perform background checks. SING is an internet application developed and sponsored by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (originally by the State Department of Administrative Services until 2014) and the Information Technology Enterprise that allows registered users to perform background checks on potential employees, volunteers, and students doing clinicals, from a single web screen. The application lets a user check Iowa criminal history, the sex offender registry, two abuse registries (child abuse and dependent adult abuse) and over 40 Public Health professional license types from one click on the screen.

A search of the Child Abuse Registry on SING provides whether there is or is not a "hit" on the Registry for the potential employee. SING does not provide the details as to the type of abuse or the circumstances surrounding the abuse. If the potential employers of a statutorily defined program requests approval to hire, the DHS will review criteria as defined in Iowa Administrative Code and indicate whether the employee is or is not prohibited from serving in the specific employment role based upon the registry placement. In 2020, there were 209,157 total requests through SING. In 2021, those requests totaled 240,672.

Considering both manual requests and SING requests, there were a total of 256,917 Registry requests for child abuse information in 2020 and a total of 286,926. The DHS is also responsible for the Registry of Dependent Adult abuse record checks and

record maintenance. This information is available in the Dependent Adult Abuse Registry Annual Report.

A historical overview of how the record check process has evolved over time is provided by State Fiscal Year (SFY):

SFY 1996

The field offices opted to process child abuse record checks in the local county offices for day care registration, day care center licensure, adoption and foster care. This process became necessary as a result of the significant time for the Registry to process the employment checks due to the increasing volume of checks.

Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to implement the Open Registry law. This law allows anyone to check the child abuse record of another with that person's authorization. Data regarding this access and usage method by the public is provided in the table below entitled "Authorizations to Release Child Abuse Information."

SFY 1999

Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to include access to child abuse information for the Department of Justice, Prosecutors Review Committee and for the general public to have access to child abuse information in cases of child fatalities and near fatalities.

The implementation of the STAR system is the only automation change for the Registry since ACAN was implemented in 1989. Microfilm continued to be a method of storage.

SFY 2001

Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to add school districts to the authorized list of entities with access for employee and volunteer record checks. Access was also added for professional licensing boards.

SFY 2002

Iowa Code chapter 235A was amended to increase access to the Registry. The child abuse record checks for childcare staff employment was centralized to a single unit (from field offices to the central office) after reorganization January 14, 2002.

Iowa Code section 235A.15 was also amended to add hospitals to the authorized list of entities with access for current and prospective employee record checks.

SFY 2004

Iowa Code section 235A.19 was amended to eliminate the Registry review requirement in the appeal process. A person appealing a founded abuse report is no

longer required to have a Registry review decision in order to proceed to an administrative hearing. All appeals are processed through the DHS Appeals Division.

SFY 2005

Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to allow access by providers of care for children who are victims of abuse or to the records of persons responsible for abuse. Access was also added for the Early Access services, or a federal, state or local governmental unit or agency of the unit that has a need for information in order to carry out its responsibilities under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.

SFY 2006

Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to allow access by nursing school programs and mandate the Board of Educational Examiners to submit child abuse record checks.

SFY 2012

Iowa Code section 135C.33 (Senate File 2164) was amended to allow for an exemption from requirements of reevaluation of record checks for health care facility employment if an evaluation by the DHS previously approved employment and current record checks do not indicate a crime was committed or founded abuse record was entered subsequent to that evaluation.

Iowa Code section 237A.5 (Senate File 2164) was amended to add that a person employed by a child care facility or child care home provider who is hired by another child care facility or child care home provider, shall be subject to a record check. This amendment also allowed for an exemption from any requirements for reevaluation of record checks if an evaluation by the DHS previously approved employment and current record checks do not indicate there is a transgression that was committed subsequent to that evaluation.

SFY 2013

Iowa Code chapters 135B and 135C (Senate File 347) were amended to allow for conditional employment in a hospital or a health care facility and also for conditional participation in a training program for up to 60 calendar days pending completion of the evaluation.

These amendments established that if an evaluation was previously performed by the DHS and the DHS determined the person's criminal and abuse backgrounds did not warrant prohibition of employment a person who is or was employed by a hospital and is hired by another hospital the person may commence employment or a new employee may commence employment after 30 days, if the conditions specified in the Act are met.

SFY 2017

Iowa Code chapter 135C.33 was amended (2017 Iowa Acts, chapter 58/House File 576) to require temporary staffing agencies to conduct criminal, child abuse, and

dependent adult abuse record checks and have an evaluation completed by the DHS prior to hiring certain health care providers.

SFY 2018

Iowa Code chapter 235A.15 was amended (2018 Iowa Acts, chapter 1104/House File 2427) to allow free clinics (as defined in Iowa Code section 135.24A) to have independent access to child abuse information for the purpose of record checks of potential volunteers and existing volunteers at the free clinic.

SFY 2019

As noted in the “Law Changes Impacting Child Abuse” section, Iowa Code section 217.30 was amended to provide for the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to share confidential information outside of the 20-day child abuse assessment period with the Central Iowa Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Multi-Disciplinary Team (CICSEC MDT).

Data Summary:

The DHS processed 9,682 requests for entities with authorized access for employment and licensure in Calendar Year (CY) 2020. In CY 2021, this total was 8,236. This request includes a check and documentation on an individual’s abuse record or provision of the written report. The following table indicates the types of requests received since State Fiscal Year (SFY) 1998.

Requests for Child Abuse Information

Year	Child Care *	Foster Home *	Adoption *	Employment **	Medical Facility	CCR&R	Schools	Volunteer	Church	General ***	Total *
SFY 1998	1,211	1,382	1,884	11,115	NA	1,529	NA	NA	NA	1,893	19,014
SFY 1999	334	990	1,990	8,402	NA	2,282	NA	NA	NA	2,493	16,491
SFY 2000	248	858	2,338	15,817	NA	1,909	NA	NA	NA	3,679	24,849
SFY 2001	38	872	2,392	17,030	NA	2,071	NA	NA	NA	3,823	25,754
SFY 2002	102	1,444	2,298	16,481	NA	2,766	3,053	NA	NA	2,654	28,798
CY 2003	214	-	2,498	15,129	NA	3,647	6,159	NA	NA	1,767	29,414
CY 2004	240	903	2,025	12,028	NA	1,680	6,320	NA	NA	430	23,626
SFY 2005	301	1,396	2,468	13,082	NA	2,558	6,555	NA	NA	592	26,952
SFY 2006	179	2,037	2,511	9,070	NA	2,078	6,507	NA	NA	771	23,153
CY 2007	325	876	2,314	6,396	NA	2,075	6,604	NA	NA	1,169	19,759
CY 2008	180	224	1,950	8,078	NA	2,152	4,579	NA	NA	1,192	18,365
CY 2009	586	691	1,598	7,879	NA	1,582	1,199	NA	NA	1,102	14,637
CY 2010	413	1,055	1,439	5,729	NA	1,688	1,015	NA	NA	1,868	13,207
CY 2011	390	1,071	1,470	3,886	NA	1,173	666	NA	NA	1,906	10,531
CY 2012	48	1,949	1,449	3,831	NA	1,107	299	NA	NA	2,430	11,113
CY 2013	270	994	1,474	3,155	NA	877	1,384	NA	NA	2,185	10,339
CY 2014	174	1,523	1,868	4,256	NA	1,077	2,088	NA	NA	3,858	14,844
CY 2015	89	716	804	1,916	NA	680	1,828	NA	NA	4,266	10,299
CY 2016	314	937	918	3,863	NA	446	568	NA	NA	1,801	8,847
CY 2017	465	1,210	931	2,844	NA	585	1,751	NA	NA	1,721	9,507
CY 2018	603	1,324	741	2,964	NA	386	1,435	NA	NA	3,379	10,832
CY 2019	1,284	1,140	602	5,449	NA	137	2,738	NA	NA	2,178	13,496
CY 2020	1,200	925	356	1,815	36	134	878	60	10	4,268	9,682
CY 2021	1,142	714	263	1,410	91	76	948	19	1	3,567	8,236

*Many record checks for child care home providers and licensed center staff are processed by the county offices and therefore not included in the totals indicated in the table above. The foster parent and adoptive parent record checks processed by the county offices are also not included in the total number of requests for child abuse information.

**Employment included subcategories for medical facilities, volunteers, and churches until they were separated into their own categories in 2020.

***General includes other state child welfare agency requests.

The public is allowed to submit a request for information on an individual if that individual provides signed authorization. In CY 2018, the DHS processed 45,797 requests from the entities identified in the table below. Authorizations received since SFY 1998 are included.

Authorization for the Release of Child Abuse Information

Year	Child Care *	Foster Home *	Adoption *	Employment	Medical Facility	CCR&R	Schools	Volunteer	Church	General *	Total *
SFY 1998	NA	NA	NA	545	165	NA	499	802	150	0	2,161
SFY 1999	NA	NA	NA	1,939	111	NA	973	657	203	0	3,919
SFY 2000	NA	NA	NA	2,178	439	NA	2,032	2,289	427	0	7,365
SFY 2001	NA	NA	NA	915	324	NA	2,814	3,294	226	0	7,563
SFY 2002	NA	NA	NA	1,541	512	NA	3,366	2,922	476	122	8,939
CY 2003	NA	NA	NA	3,317	351	NA	1,442	4,249	1,089	125	10,573
CY 2004	NA	NA	NA	6,039	1	NA	3,298	4,530	1,862	7	15,337
SFY 2005	NA	NA	NA	4,316	9	NA	6,368	5,876	1,848	131	18,679
SFY 2006	NA	NA	NA	9,452	13	NA	9,876	6,025	582	57	26,005
CY 2007	NA	NA	NA	12,234	7	NA	7,624	7,089	285	143	27,382
CY 2008	NA	NA	NA	14,863	39	NA	6,639	11,882	408	198	33,729
CY 2009	NA	NA	NA	15,436	2	NA	5,278	12,496	888	282	34,382
CY 2010	NA	NA	NA	14,593	15	NA	5,074	10,307	938	448	32,375
CY 2011	NA	NA	NA	14,602	16	NA	7,206	10,042	411	442	32,719
CY 2012	NA	NA	NA	17,677	0	NA	8,308	11,437	110	552	38,084
CY 2013	NA	NA	NA	29,451	3,208	NA	9,784	7,073	4,632	508	54,656
CY 2014	NA	NA	NA	38,594	2,147	NA	10,418	5,841	3,439	1,204	61,643
CY 2015	NA	NA	NA	13,991	173	NA	10,827	4,859	3,463	803	34,116
CY 2016	NA	NA	NA	20,116	102	NA	12,248	3,349	3,448	675	39,938
CY 2017	NA	NA	NA	21,419	530	NA	12,745	4,911	5,079	1,077	45,761
CY 2018	NA	NA	NA	19,419	1,081	NA	13,441	5,128	5,333	1,268	45,797
CY 2019	NA	NA	NA	30,212	884	NA	16,578	7,057	6,888	1,610	63,229
CY 2020	396	222	252	16,694	103	77	13,779	2,820	3,458	277	38,078
CY 2021	708	412	284	16,166	112	53	13,558	2,413	4,087	225	38,018

*General included subcategories for child care, foster homes, adoption, and CCR&R until they were separated into their own categories in 2020. These subcategories generally do not require authorization unless the checks are accessed via SING.

At the close of each calendar year (CY), the DHS generates statistics for child abuse and neglect. The following table provides the total number of reports of suspected abuse that were accepted for assessment of child abuse and neglect and the breakout of findings for those assessments.

General Child Abuse Data and Findings

Fiscal Year	Accepted Assessments	Abuse Founded	Abuse Confirmed	Abuse Not Confirmed	Family Assessment
SFY 1998	20,852	4,550	2,219	14,083	NA
SFY 1999	18,632	4,728	1,760	12,144	NA
SFY 2000	20,039	5,344	7,204	12,835	NA
SFY 2001	25,105	6,731	8,691	16,414	NA
SFY 2002	24,246	6,452	8,062	16,184	NA
CY 2003	25,490	9,509	unavailable	15,981	NA
CY 2004	25,270	7,756	1,934	15,580	NA
CY 2005	27,039	7,874	2,041	17,124	NA
CY 2006	24,789	7,529	1,728	15,532	NA
CY 2007	22,991	6,610	1,874	13,507	NA
CY 2008	23,236	6,141	1,840	15,255	NA
CY 2009	25,814	7,011	1,856	16,947	NA
CY 2010	26,413	6,794	2,187	17,432	NA
CY 2011	30,747	7,119	2,593	21,035	NA
CY 2012	28,918	7,132	2,484	19,302	NA
CY 2013	26,129	6,678	2,233	17,218	NA
CY 2014	23,562	4,380	1,154	10,259	7,769
CY 2015	24,298	4,811	1,231	10,787	7,469
CY 2016	25,707	5,266	1,218	11,766	7,457
CY 2017	33,418	7,023	1,535	17,724	7,136
CY 2018	35,029	7,286	1,057	19,328	6,958
CY 2019	33,004	6,891	1,623	17,947	6,543
CY 2020	30,151	6,398	1,537	15,766	6,450
CY 2021	35,593	6,966	1,577	20,323	6,727

The data counts each accepted child protective assessment. Each assessment may address one or multiple children; this data counts only the assessment and not individual children. Data is counted by CY, effective 2003 to conform to federal data reports.

In reflection on the data, it is important to note, the total number of accepted assessments in CY 2011 does not particularly reflect an increase in the number of children abused, but rather, was a result of reports of suspected abuse that were required to be split into multiple assessments due to a change in practice that further protected confidential information. This is supported by the findings regarding abuse for unique children, as this number decreased nearly 7 percent from CY 2010.

In CY 2014, the total number of accepted assessments decreased 10 percent from 2013. However, this total is considered to be within normal annual variation. Most assessments are Not Confirmed and is aligned with National data. As expected with the implementation of differential response, 33% of all accepted cases were assigned as Family Assessments and 67% were assigned as Child Abuse Assessments.

The significant increase in the total number of accepted assessments for CY 2017 stems in part from a practice change that restructured the way the DHS addressed additional allegations, which arose while there was already an open child abuse assessment. Prior to February 2017, if a new abuse allegation was accepted for assessment during the course of an open child abuse assessment, those additional allegations were added to the open child abuse assessment. Effective February 2017 through September 2018, a change in practice required a separate child abuse assessment for any additional allegations accepted; no longer allowing the additional allegations to be rolled into the open assessment. This practice was temporary until an update to the child welfare information system (which houses all child protective assessment information) could be implemented to allow additional allegations to be formally linked to the open child abuse assessment; no longer requiring a separate report. Because the system implementation was completed in September 2018, near the end of the CY, it is not surprising that the total number of accepted assessments remains elevated in CY 2018.

A law change, which became effective July 1, 2017, also played a significant role in the 8% decrease in assessments that were eligible for the Family Assessment path. This law change added cocaine, heroin, and opium/opiates to the legal definition of a “dangerous substance” and required these allegations to go down the child abuse assessment path. As a result, there was an 8% increase in the total number of child abuse assessments from the previous year. Because the law change was only effective for half of CY 2017, the percent of total child abuse assessments increased as expected in CY 2018 as well.

The decrease in total assessed reports in 2020 is believed to be a result of the global pandemic from COVID-19. As children were not being seen as regularly when schools closed and in-person non-emergency medical and mental health appointments ceased for many months, fewer children were being seen by mandatory reporters which resulted in less reports of suspected abuse.

As schools and professional office visits resumed in-person, it was not a surprise to see the total number of assessed reports in 2021 increase by 5,442 assessments when compared to 2020. Assessment totals for 2021 realigned closer to pre-pandemic totals.

Conclusion:

The Central Abuse Registry includes a statewide listing of persons who were found to have abused or neglected a child. Access to the Registry is limited to persons or entities with authorized access, as provided by Iowa law. The annual Child Abuse Registry Report provides the General Assembly with non-confidential data related to the purpose of the Registry and serves as a tool for ongoing data analysis.

Overall, requests for child abuse information have decreased between 3,814-5,260 over the past two years. There was a decrease in requests from every category, with the employment category having the largest decrease of between 3,634-4,039 and the school category having the second largest decrease between 1,790-1,860. Because staffing issues have been of great concern since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is believed this is a factor in the overall decrease.

Authorizations for the release of child abuse information also decreased significantly overall, with a decrease of approximately 25,000 less authorizations over the past two years. There was a decrease in authorizations from every category, with the volunteer category having a decrease over 50% (just over 4,000). The employment and church categories experienced decreases just under 50% (employment authorizations decreased around 14,000 and church authorizations decreased 3,000 decrease). School authorizations saw a decrease under 25%, with around 3,000 less authorizations. The decrease in overall authorizations is also believed to be a consequence of the staffing issues that have impacted every category since the COVID-19 pandemic.

In review of child abuse and neglect data, there was a slight decrease with just over 30,000 assessments accepted in CY 2020 and a jump back up around 35,000 assessments accepted in CY 2021. As captured in the “General Child Abuse and Data Findings” table (on the Child Welfare Data and Reports web link below), 6,450 (21%) of all accepted reports of suspected child abuse were assigned as a Family Assessment and had no finding/outcome in 2020 and in 2021 that total was 6,727 (19%). The remaining 23,701 (79%) of accepted reports in 2020 were assigned as a Child Abuse Assessment and in 2021 that total was 28,886 (81%). Of those Child Abuse Assessments in 2020, 15,766 (67%) were Not Confirmed and in 2021, 20,323 (70%) were Not Confirmed. There was Confirmed or Founded abuse in the remaining 7,935 (33%) in 2020, which included 10,539 unique children. Of those unique children, 1,947 were subjects of Confirmed abuse and 8,592 were subjects

of Founded abuse. In 2021, there was Confirmed or Founded abuse in the remaining 8,543 (30%) of accepted reports, which included 11,292 unique children. Of those unique children, 1,922 were subjects of Confirmed abuse and 9,370 were subjects of Founded abuse.

The perpetrators of the Founded abuse were all added or remained (from previous incidents of Founded abuse) on the Child Abuse Registry, in accordance with Iowa Code sections 232.71D and 235A.19.

Please see the Child Welfare Data and Reports on the DHS website for more information on child abuse outcomes, statistics, and Differential Response:
<https://dhs.iowa.gov/reports/child-welfare-data-and-report>