Child Welfare Client Expectations & Responsibilities - CPS

Department of Children & Family Services
Building a Stronger Louisiana

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) ensures equal access to its services and activities. DCFS provides interpreter services and communication aids (e.g., sign language, bilingual staff, and assistive technology) to clients and families who need them. Clients are encouraged to request any accommodations necessary to fully understand and participate in DCFS services.

(1) What to Expect from a DCFS Child Protective Services (CPS) Worker:

- Professional, respectful, and compassionate conduct
- Clear communication and explanation of the investigation process
- Answers to your questions about the investigation or assessment
- Notification if your child was contacted without your knowledge
- Requests for:
  Names of relatives or friends for potential child placement
  Information about Native American/Indian heritage
  Signatures to release medical information
  Support persons for your family
  Services for your family, preferably near your home
  Collaboration on a written safety plan, if needed

(2) Your Rights as a DCFS Client:

- Courteous, fair, and non-discriminatory treatment
- Confidentiality of your records
- Participation in all service decisions
- Services from qualified professionals
- The right to refuse services not court-ordered or personally requested
- Services that address the concerns leading to DCFS involvement
- The right to meet with your assigned worker to discuss service issues
- The ability to file a complaint or grievance
- The right to have someone speak on your behalf
- Protection of your rights and personal freedom
- The right to appeal a substantiated abuse/neglect finding to the Louisiana Division of Administrative Law

(3) What to Expect for your Child throughout the Investigative Process:

- Your child's confidentiality will be protected
- The worker will request your permission for any follow-up interviews
- If services are needed, the worker will consult with you to ensure appropriate referrals are made

(4) Client Responsibilities:

- Providing DCFS with all relevant information related to needed services
- Sharing any cultural, religious, health, or special needs (for yourself or your child)

- Maintaining regular contact and visits with your child as outlined in the court-ordered service plan
- Working cooperatively and staying in contact with your assigned caseworker
- Notifying your worker of any changes in your life or circumstances
- Keeping all scheduled appointments with your worker, service providers, and the court
- Participating in your child's care and development
- Attending all court hearings and family team meetings
- Informing your lawyer and caseworker of any concerns
- Engaging in services offered by DCFS
- Giving consent for your child's medical treatment
- Attending your child's health and medical appointments when needed
- Creating and maintaining a safe home environment for your child
- Informing your worker if your child is a member, or may be eligible as a member, of a Native American/Indian tribe
- Immediately updating your worker with any changes in address or contact information
    - **Note:** All official notices, including those related to child abuse/neglect investigations and appeal rights, will be sent to the address on file
- Complying with Louisiana law if required to self-report a child welfare investigation or finding to your employer
- **Important:** Failing to update your address may result in losing your right to appeal

(5) **Are you or your spouse an active military member?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

_____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Print Name

_____

Mailing Address

_____

Print Children's Names and Dates of Birth

Your signature indicates your receipt and understanding of the information in this document.

_____ _____

Signature **Date**

Complaints and Grievances

If you are not satisfied with the services your family receives from the Child Protective Services Worker, please tell your worker's supervisor. If the complaint is not resolved, the complaint should be referred to the Child Welfare Manager of the supervisor. If the complaint is not resolved contact the Area Director. If it is not resolved you may contact the Regional Administrator. If you are still not satisfied, you may contact DCFS CW Inquiries and Complaints at (225) 342-9141.