



Early Intervention Referral for Infants and Toddlers

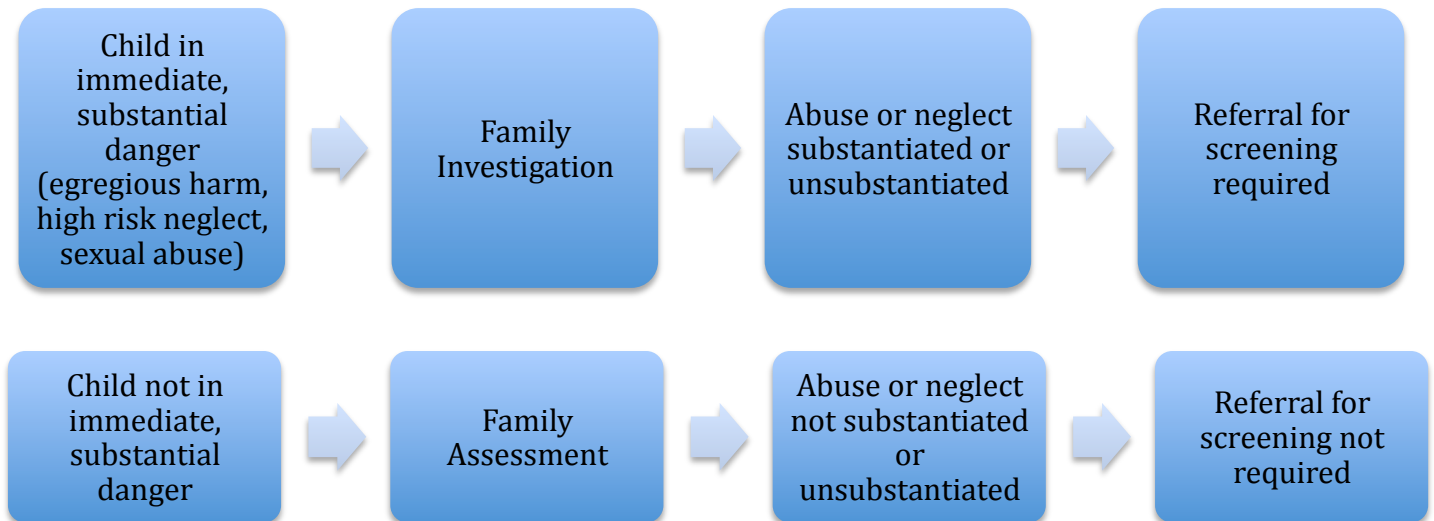
Senate File 1165 (Sen. Sean Nienow)

Purpose: Update Minnesota State Statute § 125A.30 (Interagency Early Intervention Committees) to reflect Minnesota's current child welfare policies. This will require infants and toddlers who are at-risk of developmental delays as a result of abuse or neglect be referred to early intervention to determine if they are meeting developmental milestones.

By 2005, all Minnesota counties had adopted a less adversarial, strengths-based approach to respond to child abuse and neglect. As a result, Minnesota counties have a two-track child welfare system. One track, **Family Investigation**, is used when there is reason to believe that substantial child endangerment or an immediate, serious threat to a child's safety exists. Family Investigation determines whether maltreatment has occurred (substantiated or unsubstantiated) and is used in approximately one-third of child welfare reports. The other track, **Family Assessment**, is used for reports that do not likely involve substantial child endangerment. Family Assessment does not make a maltreatment determination and is used for the majority of families.

Current law: Children who are involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect are to be referred to the local early intervention program for a screening. This screening is required under Part C (Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities) of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act. In terms of this policy, Minnesota ranks below the national average and in the bottom half of states in the proportion of infants and toddlers receiving early intervention services.

Report for child abuse or neglect is screened-in



Why is it important for infants and toddlers who have been reported for abuse or neglect to be referred for an early intervention screening?

- According to national research, more than half of infants and toddlers who have been abused or neglected are at substantial risk of physical, developmental and emotional delays.

- Children in child protection have a known disability at more than four times the rate of other Minnesota children.
- Children who are reported for abuse or neglect, but for whom the maltreatment is not substantiated, are at similar developmental risk as those for whom maltreatment is substantiated.
- In order to ensure that intervention is provided when the developing brain is most capable of change, infants and toddlers in need of services must be identified as early as possible.



What do we know about the effectiveness of early intervention?

- 46% of infants and toddlers in a national study who had received early intervention and had been at-risk of needing special education services did not need special education when they reached kindergarten age.
- One-third of children followed over time in a Minnesota study who were provided Part C early intervention services, including some children involved in the child protection system, did not need special education by second or third grade.
- 96% of families participating in Part C nationwide felt they knew how to help their children learn and develop.
- Intervention is most effective when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.

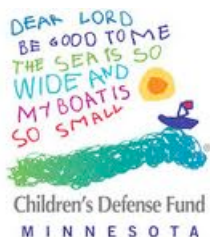
Infants and Toddlers Involved in Child Protection (DHS, 2009)

Age	Family Investigation Response	Family Assessment Response
Under 1 year	882	1394
1 year	516	1064
2 years	545	1065
	1943	3523

How does Minnesota benefit from early intervention?

- Today's infants and toddlers are Minnesota's future workers, parents and leaders. Minnesota's future workforce must be well-equipped to build a vibrant economy and support a growing population of seniors. By 2030, the number of Minnesotans age 65 and older will increase by 600,000. Minnesota's ratio of workers to retirees will fall from the current rate of five per retiree, to four per retiree in 2020, to three per retiree in 2030. Minnesota's youngest members must develop the skills and build the knowledge necessary to succeed in early childhood and school.
- Providing children with a strong start can avert problems in many areas of life, including: health and mental health care, special education, juvenile and adult delinquency, and corrections.

Sources available from CDF-MN.



Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
 555 Park Street, Suite 410, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103
 (651) 227-6121
www.cdf-mn.org

March 2012