Revised Best Practice Guide for the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence

TOPIC
Revised Minnesota Best Practice Guide for the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence (DHS 3490-ENG)

PURPOSE
Announce publication of revised best practice guide for use in cases involving co-occurring child maltreatment and domestic violence.

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SIGNED
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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE
The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of “People First” language.
I. Background

The Minnesota Best Practice Response to the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence was first published in January 2018, following meetings of the Minnesota Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence Response Path Work Group. The charge of the work group arose from the Governor’s Task Force on the Protection of Children, submitted in final recommendations in March 2015, to “develop guidance and specific protocols for responding to the co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic violence when families become involved in the child protection system.”

The 2021 revised Best Practice Guide for the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence (DHS-3490-ENG) builds on the 2018 version to include additional guidance and protocols, developed in partnership with subject matter experts from community-based domestic violence programs, tribal social service agencies, culturally specific social service provider organizations, and other relevant experts and stakeholders. Minnesota Department of Human Services staff is grateful for the numerous persons who contributed their insights and expertise to improve this guide. Feedback on the guide is encouraged, directed to nicole.lindemyer@state.mn.us.

A. Purpose of the guide

The purpose of the 2018 Best Practice Response to the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence was to improve uniformity and consistency in responding to the co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic violence, promoting best practice statewide. The 2021 revisions advance the original goal of improving uniformity and consistency in child welfare practice for cases involving these co-occurring conditions, with emphasis on culturally responsive practice guidance and protocols for implementation.

B. Consistency with Minnesota’s Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening, and Response Path Guidelines

An additional goal of the 2021 revisions is to ensure that this guide is consistent with the Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening, and Response Path guide (Screening Guidelines), consistent with subsequent revisions to it. See Minnesota Child Maltreatment Intake, Screening and Response Path Guidelines (DHS-5144-ENG).

1. Allegations must be made against offenders of violence

The Screening Guidelines clarify that, “In situations of domestic violence, allegations concerning a child protection response should be made against the perpetrators of violence.”
2. Child protection agencies are urged to partner with domestic violence programs

The Screening Guidelines state that, “Agencies are strongly encouraged to develop collaborative relationships with local domestic violence programs and to share contact information for those programs with interested families and individuals coming in contact with the child protection system. Whether an abused parent seeks out and follows through with receiving services from a domestic violence program is a decision that only abused parents can make based on their knowledge and assessment of the risks and benefits involved.”

II. Changes to the guide

The revised Best Practice Guide for the Co-occurrence of Child Maltreatment and Domestic Violence includes several changes. Some of these revisions relate only to the goals of updating statutory citations, streamlining language, and improving the flow of text. Other revisions are to add, clarify, or otherwise make substantive changes. The substantive revisions include new:

- Section on intersectionality and disproportionality, with emphasis on the importance of culturally responsive practice, compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA), and inclusion of culturally specific services and resources for American Indian victims of domestic violence
- Protocol for interviewing adult victims of domestic violence
- Protocol for interviewing and case planning with domestic violence offenders
- Guidance and reference to domestic violence-specific safety planning tool
- Section on prevention and building resiliency
- Section on professional well-being.

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