

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2020 SESSION

CHAPTER 228

An Act to amend and reenact § 63.2-1506 of the Code of Virginia, relating to family assessments; timeline.

[S 412]

Approved March 10, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 63.2-1506 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 63.2-1506. Family assessments by local departments.

A. A family assessment requires the collection of information necessary to determine:

1. The immediate safety needs of the child;
2. The protective and rehabilitative services needs of the child and family that will deter abuse or neglect;
3. Risk of future harm to the child;
4. Whether the mother of a child who was exposed in utero to a controlled substance sought substance abuse counseling or treatment prior to the child's birth; and
5. Alternative plans for the child's safety if protective and rehabilitative services are indicated and the family is unable or unwilling to participate in services.

B. When a local department has been designated as a child-protective services differential response system participant by the Department pursuant to § 63.2-1504 and responds to the report or complaint by conducting a family assessment, the local department shall:

1. Conduct an immediate family assessment and, if the report or complaint was based upon one of the factors specified in subsection B of § 63.2-1509, the local department may file a petition pursuant to § 16.1-241.3;

2. Obtain and consider the results of a search of the child abuse and neglect registry for any individual who is the subject of a family assessment. The local board shall determine whether the individual has resided in another state within at least the preceding five years, and, if he has resided in another state, the local board shall request a search of the child abuse and neglect registry or equivalent registry maintained by such state. The local board also may obtain and consider, in accordance with regulations of the Board, statewide criminal history record information from the Central Criminal Records Exchange for any individual who is the subject of a family assessment;

3. Immediately contact the subject of the report and the family of the child alleged to have been abused or neglected and give each a written and an oral explanation of the family assessment procedure. The family assessment shall be in writing and shall be completed in accordance with Board regulation;

4. Complete the family assessment within ~~45~~ 60 days and transmit a report to such effect to the Department and to the person who is the subject of the family assessment. ~~However, upon written justification by the local department, the family assessment may be extended, not to exceed a total of 60 days;~~

5. Consult with the family to arrange for necessary protective and rehabilitative services to be provided to the child and his family. Families have the option of declining the services offered as a result of the family assessment. If the family declines the services, the case shall be closed unless the local department determines that sufficient cause exists to redetermine the case as one that needs to be investigated. In no instance shall a case be redetermined as an investigation solely because the family declines services;

6. Petition the court for services deemed necessary;

7. Make no disposition of founded or unfounded for reports in which a family assessment is completed. Reports in which a family assessment is completed shall not be entered into the central registry contained in § 63.2-1515; and

8. Commence an immediate investigation, if at any time during the completion of the family assessment, the local department determines that an investigation is required.

C. When a local department has been designated as a child-protective services differential response agency by the Department, the local department may investigate any report of child abuse or neglect, but the following valid reports of child abuse or neglect shall be investigated: (i) sexual abuse, (ii) child fatality, (iii) abuse or neglect resulting in serious injury as defined in § 18.2-371.1, (iv) cases involving a child's being left alone in the same dwelling with a person to whom the child is not related by blood or marriage and who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender pursuant to § 9.1-902, (v) child has been taken into the custody of the local department, or (vi) cases involving a caretaker at a state-licensed child day center, religiously exempt child day center, licensed, registered or approved family day home, private or public school, hospital or

any institution. If a report or complaint is based upon one of the factors specified in subsection B of § 63.2-1509, the local department shall (a) conduct a family assessment, unless an investigation is required pursuant to this subsection or other provision of law or is necessary to protect the safety of the child, and (b) develop a plan of safe care in accordance with federal law, regardless of whether the local department makes a finding of abuse or neglect.

D. Any individual who is the subject of a family assessment conducted under this section shall notify the local department prior to changing his place of residence and provide the local department with the address of his new residence.