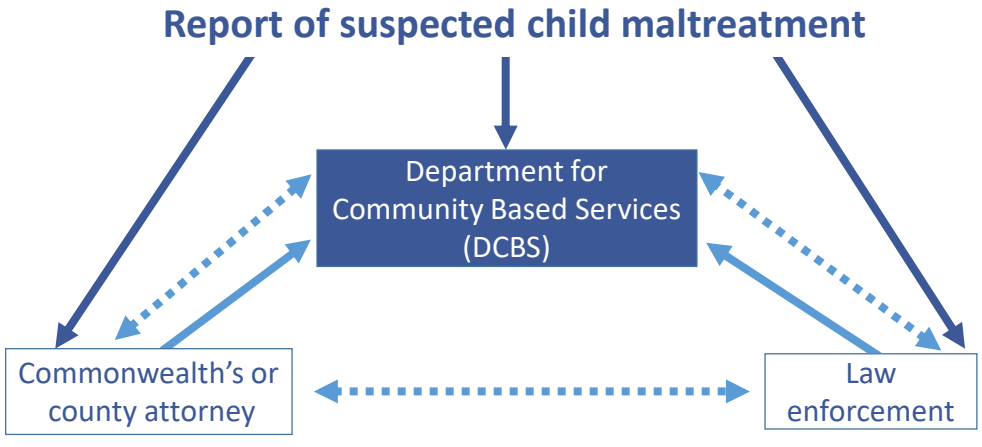
Screening Of Child Maltreatment Claims In Kentucky

Legislative Oversight And Investigations Committee

October 8, 2026

Mandatory Reporting Requirement



Mandatory Reporting Requirement

Department for Community Based Services (DCBS)

- 24-hour hotline
- Online reporting system
- By mail, email, or fax
- Other

2025 DCBS Centralized Intake Report Volume:

- **175,796 reports received**
- **126,886 routed to Child Protective Services (CPS)**

2b

DCBS Intake Process

Kentucky law sets criteria that must be met before a CPS case can be opened.

Information collected:

- The incident
- Suspected victim and their family
- Alleged perpetrator

Structured Decision Model (SDM)



3a

DCBS Intake Process

SDM considers reported facts against legal framework governing CPS cases, answering 4 basic questions:



1. Does DCBS have authority to provide a CPS response?
2. Does the alleged act meet criteria for a maltreatment type the law recognizes?
3. How quickly must DCBS respond?
4. How does a supervisor's consultation change the SDM tool's recommendation?

3b

Does DCBS Have Authority To Provide A CPS Response?

Threshold Criteria

- **Age**: the alleged victim must be under 18.
- **Caretaker**: the accused perpetrator must be a parent, guardian, or someone else with custodial responsibility.
- **Kentucky jurisdiction**: (DCBS wording) A report only fails this when the child lives out of state, cannot be found in Kentucky, and the incident happened elsewhere.

Does not meet threshold criteria → **Screened Out**

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Does The Alleged Act Meet Criteria For A Maltreatment Type The Law Recognizes?

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Human trafficking
- Neglect
- Emotional injury
- Dependency

Example of maltreatment criteria as presented in the SDM tool

Physical abuse

- ☐ Non-accidental physical injury
- ☐ Suspicious physical injury
- ☐ Excessive or cruel punishment
- ☐ Female genital mutilation
- ☐ Threat of physical abuse
- ☐ N/A

5a

Does The Alleged Act Meet Criteria For A Maltreatment Type The Law Recognizes?

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Human trafficking
- Neglect
- Emotional injury
- Dependency

Meets one or more criteria → **Screen In**

Does not meet any criteria → **Screen Out**

5b

How Quickly Must DCBS Respond?

Response time is based on the level of risk to the child

4-hour response		Immediate risk
24-hour response		High risk
48-hour response		Moderate risk

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How Does A Supervisor's Consultation Change The SDM Tool's Recommendation?

SDM Recommendations	Supervisory Consultation
Screen out	Screen In
	• Non-Investigatory Response
Screen In	Screen out
	• Family cannot be found • Duplicate report • Other reasons

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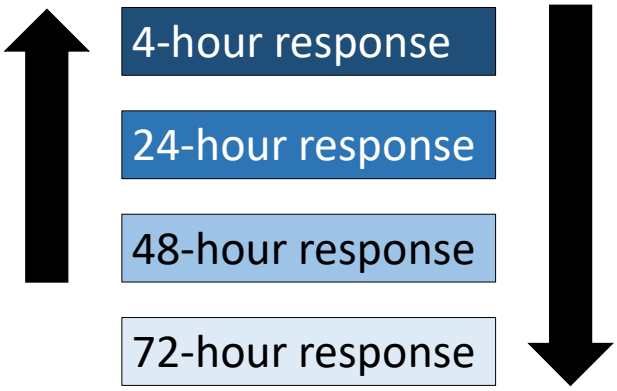
How Does A Supervisor's Consultation Change The SDM Tool's Recommendation?



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Summary of Intake Process

Report routed to CPS Screening Process

Does the report meet Threshold Criteria?

Does the alleged act meet Maltreatment?

How quickly should DCBS respond?

Supervisory consultation decision

Final Intake Recommendation

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Final Intake Recommendation 2025

Screening Decision	Claims	% Claims
Investigation or assessment	58,778	46.3%
Did not meet criteria	33,827	26.7
Resource links	27,695	21.8
Non-investigatory	6,586	5.2
Total	**126,886**	**100.0%**

Source: Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Intake Process and Flow. Aug. 7, 2026. Email from Elissa Fochtman to Christopher T. Hall, Aug. 7, 2026.

2025 Reports Recommended For Investigation or Assessment By Maltreatment Type

Investigation Or Assessment	Claims	% Claims
Abuse	28,074	47.8%
Physical	22,270	37.9
Sexual	4,286	7.3
Emotional	1,518	2.6
Neglect	27,961	47.6
Dependency	1,980	3.4
Extended commitment or recommitment	450	0.8
Trafficking by non-caretaker	273	0.5
Sexual	271	0.5
Labor	2	<0.1
Trafficking by caretaker	40	0.1
Sexual	32	0.1
Labor	8	<0.1
Total	**58,778**	**100.0%**

Source: Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Intake Process and Flow. Aug. 7, 2026. Email from Elissa Fochtman to Christopher T. Hall, Aug. 7, 2026.

Questions?