

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



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Maine Did Not Comply With Screening, Assessment, and Investigation Requirements for Responding to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

Why OIG Did This Audit

- Abuse and neglect against a child by a parent, caregiver, or another person can have a long-term impact on the child's health, opportunity, and well-being. Abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional in nature. Neglect is a failure to meet the child's basic needs, such as housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care.
- This audit is part of a series that examines States' compliance with the requirements of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect. Based on our risk assessment and a report by Maine's Child Welfare Ombudsman that identified substantial issues where there was a deviation from best practices or adherence to policy or both that had a material effect on the safety and best interests of the children, or rights of the parents, we selected Maine for our first audit.

What OIG Found

On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that 94 percent of child abuse and neglect reports reviewed were not in compliance with 1 or more requirements related to immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and investigation.

Number of Reports	Deviation from Requirements	Number of Reports	Deviation from Requirements
92	A written notification letter was not sent to each parent/caregiver or person responsible for the child within 10 days of the investigation finding decision.	9	Risk assessments were not completed within 35 days of completing the investigation.
59	Safety assessments were not completed as required.	8	A safety plan was not completed by OCFS as required.
44	Investigations were not completed within 35 days of screening in a report.	7	A response time was not assigned.
17	Initial interviews with children and adult critical case members were not always completed as required.		

What OIG Recommends

We made five recommendations, including that Maine provide additional training to caseworkers and supervisors to achieve compliance with requirements and develop additional written policies and procedures. The full recommendations are in the report.

Maine concurred with all of our recommendations.