



## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping children safe from child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N) is the foundation on which child protective services was established and is the first goal of any child protective services response.

~ Child Welfare League of America



### Audit Conclusions

- MDHHS's efforts to ensure the appropriate and consistent application of selected CPS investigation requirements were **not sufficient**.
- MDHHS's efforts to accurately capture data used to report its compliance with selected CPS investigation timeliness requirements were **moderately effective**.

### Potential Statutory Improvements

<b>Finding #1</b>	Investigation Commencement
<b>Finding #18</b>	Monitoring of Participation in Post-Investigative Services
<b>Finding #22</b>	Central Registry Requirement for Unlicensed Child Care Providers
<b>Observation #1</b>	Physical Safety of CPS Investigators
<b>Observation #2</b>	Oversight of County CA/N Investigation Protocols



### Audit Findings

**17**  
Material Conditions

**7**  
Reportable Conditions

Selected findings include:

Investigation commencement within 24 hours	<b>Finding #1</b>
Central Registry clearances	<b>Finding #2</b>
Criminal history checks	<b>Finding #3</b>
CPS history checks	<b>Finding #4</b>
Communication with mandated reporters	<b>Finding #5</b>
Safety planning	<b>Finding #8</b>
Filing of court petitions	<b>Finding #9</b>
Assessments of risk of future harm	<b>Finding #13</b>
Supervisory oversight	<b>Finding #17*</b>
Monitoring of families' participation in post-investigative services	<b>Finding #18</b>
Capturing of MiSACWIS commencement data	<b>Finding #24</b>

\* Finding #17 pertains to ineffective CPS supervisory review which significantly contributed to 15 findings included in the report, 11 of which are considered to be material.

Michigan's Child Protection Law (CPL) and MDHHS policy provide the framework and requirements for MDHHS to carry out its CPS investigations. CPS investigators are compelled to follow these requirements.

### Survey Results

We surveyed 1,680 CPS supervisors and investigators and received 990 responses (59% response rate) that showed:

- 63%** of investigators responded that their CPS **caseload negatively impacted** their ability to conduct investigations in compliance with MDHHS policy, and 55% said this happened **at least half of the time**.
- 39%** of supervisors responded that the **number of staff they are supervising negatively impacts** their ability to thoroughly review and approve CPS investigations.
- 25%** of investigators **feared for their physical safety** half the time or more when conducting CPS investigations.



MDHHS concluded that a preponderance of evidence of CA/N occurred in 26% of CPS investigations. A **preponderance of evidence** means evidence that is of greater weight or more convincing than evidence offered in opposition to it; a 51% or greater likelihood that CA/N occurred.



## Fiscal Year 2014, 2015, and 2016 CPS Investigations and Category Disposition

	Category				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Total investigations	13,200	19,500	37,700	184,700	11,700
Preponderance of evidence?	✓	✓	✓		
Court petition must be filed by MDHHS?	✓				
Level of risk of future harm	High or Intensive	High or Intensive	Low or Moderate		
Perpetrator added to the Central Registry?	✓	✓	In limited circumstances		
Post-investigative monitoring of family?	✓	✓	See Finding #18		

## Audit Sample

**Audit Period:** May 1, 2014 through July 31, 2016  
**Statewide Completed CPS Investigations:** 206,000  
**Sampled Investigations:** 160  
**Alleged Child Victims in Sample:** 269  
**Counties in Sample:** 15 (highlighted on map)

We judgmentally and randomly selected representative samples of 160 CPS investigations. All investigations subject to our audit sample were **closed** CPS investigations. We examined hard-copy and electronic casefile information for each sampled investigation via on-site reviews in 14 Michigan counties and an off-site review for one additional county.

**We reported deficiencies in 159 (99%) of 160 reviewed CPS investigations, ranging from 1 to 13 reported deficiencies per investigation, and averaging 5.**

