



DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

2017 JOINT INVESTIGATION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Prepared by the Office of Child Welfare Investigations

Pursuant to A.R.S § 8-817, the Department of Child Safety's Office of Child Welfare Investigations (OCWI) developed an annual report on joint investigations conducted during the fiscal year. This report provides data on criminal conduct cases that received a joint investigation from DCS and the appropriate law enforcement agency, in addition to the reasons why a criminal conduct case did not receive a joint-investigation.

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) is required to develop, establish, and implement initial screening and safety assessment protocols in consultation with the Attorney General and statewide with county attorneys, chiefs of police, sheriffs, medical experts, victims' rights advocates, domestic violence victim advocates, and mandatory reporters. These inter-agency protocols are to guide the conduct of investigations of allegations involving criminal conduct. DCS has worked with the aforementioned agencies to comply with the requirements set forth in statute.

When a citizen calls the Centralized Intake Hotline with a concern of suspected abuse or neglect, the Intake Specialist will determine if the call meets the pre-established criteria for a report. Once the Intake Specialist has gathered all necessary information, they will generate a report for investigation and assign it to a field unit. Tracking characteristics are assigned by the Centralized Intake Hotline based on the information provided by the caller. A tracking characteristic is a circumstance that occurs in a report. It may occur independently of child abuse or neglect allegations or may carry a general description of a condition that exists in the family. Reports requiring a joint investigation with law enforcement have a tracking characteristic of Criminal Conduct (CC).¹ If during the course of an investigation, the Case Specialist determines a subsequent tracking characteristic applies, it may then be added to the case.

OCWI's primary goal is to protect children by jointly investigating criminal conduct allegations of child abuse or neglect within the State of Arizona. This is accomplished by conducting a joint investigation with DCS/OCWI and Law Enforcement personnel.

¹ "Criminal conduct allegation" means an allegation of conduct by a parent, guardian, or custodian of a child that, if true, would constitute any of the following:

- (a) A violation of section 13-3623 involving child abuse.
- (b) A felony offense that constitutes domestic violence as defined in section 13-3601.
- (c) A violation of section 13-1404 or 13-1406 involving a minor.
- (d) A violation of section 13-1405, 13-1410 or 13-1417.
- (e) Any other act of abuse that is classified as a felony.
- (f) An offense that constitutes domestic violence as defined in section 13-3601 and that involves a minor who is a victim of or was in imminent danger during the domestic violence.

During fiscal year 2017, the DCS Centralized Intake Hotline received a total of approximately 47,977 reports. This is a 3.89 percent decrease over fiscal year 2016.

Number of Reports Coded as Criminal Conduct Allegations

The first data element in the table that follows is the number of reports generated for field investigation that contained a CC allegation (Table 1). As required by Department protocols, any report that contains a CC characteristic must be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency and a joint investigation must occur.

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF REPORTS CODED AS CRIMINAL CONDUCT (CC) ALLEGATIONS
RECEIVED BY THE DEPARTMENT**

County	Number of Reports
APACHE	32
COCHISE	157
COCONINO	108
GILA	64
GRAHAM	68
GREENLEE	0
LA PAZ	20
MARICOPA	4,653
MOHAVE	251
NAVAJO	103
PIMA	1,427
PINAL	558
SANTA CRUZ	34
YAVAPAI	249
YUMA	190
Total	7,914

In fiscal year 2016, there were 8,503 reports that contained a CC characteristic statewide. In fiscal year 2017, 7,914 reports contained a CC characteristic, which is a 6.9 percent decrease from the prior year. As in previous reporting years, the majority of reports that contain the CC characteristic occur in Maricopa County. The next highest number of reports containing these characteristics occurs in Pima County.

Joint Investigations

The second data element reported is the number of reports jointly investigated according to the protocols (Table 2). As stated previously, all reports that contain the CC allegation are intended to be jointly investigated by DCS and the appropriate law enforcement agency.

**TABLE 2: NUMBER OF CHILD SAFETY REPORTS CATEGORIZED
AS CC JOINTLY INVESTIGATED ACCORDING TO THE PROTOCOLS**

County	Number of Reports
APACHE	28
COCHISE	149
COCONINO	81
GILA	57
GRAHAM	68
GREENLEE	0
LA PAZ	18
MARICOPA	4,248
MOHAVE	188
NAVAJO	80
PIMA	1,364
PINAL	535
SANTA CRUZ	34
YAVAPAI	195
YUMA	182
Total	7,227

The table below shows 100 percent of investigations conducted by OCWI were jointly investigated according to the protocols (Table 3). This is an increase of .85 percent from last year's 99.15 percent. DCS/OCWI will continue to identify barriers and strengthen relationships with law enforcement to ensure that joint investigations are conducted for reports which require them. Table 3 also shows that 84.48% of investigations conducted by DCS investigators were jointly investigated. This is an increase of almost 29 percent from FY 2016 when only 55.5 percent were jointly investigated.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF CC REPORTS JOINTLY INVESTIGATED BY OCWI ACCORDING TO THE PROTOCOLS

Agency Conducting Investigation	Total of Number Criminal Conduct Reports	Number of Criminal Conduct Reports Not Jointly Investigated	Number of Reports With a Joint Investigation Conducted	Percentage of Reports with a Joint Investigation Conducted
DCS INVESTIGATIONS	4,426	435	3,739	84.48%
OCWI INVESTIGATIONS	3,488	0	3,488	100%
Total	7,914	435	7,227	91.32%

There are several reasons a joint investigation between DCS/OCWI and law enforcement may not occur (Table 4). The main reasons are:

- **Child Not Available:** At the time of the initial contact by DCS, OCWI, or law enforcement, the alleged child victim is not available to be interviewed. This occasionally happens, for example, if a report is received and the alleged child victim is located in another state at the time of the investigation.
- **DCS Not Available:** At the time of the initial contact by law enforcement, or during subsequent interviews with the alleged victim or perpetrators, the DCS case manager is unable to be present to participate in the investigation. An example is when a report is called in to the DCS Hotline by the Victims Witness Advocate Office to report abuse or neglect of a child after police interviews and the investigation have already occurred.
- **Law Enforcement Disagrees:** When the DCS case manager receives a report requiring joint investigation, contact is made with the appropriate law enforcement agency to make a police report and request the joint investigation. Law enforcement officials sometimes decline to accept the information as meeting criminal conduct standards and inform the DCS case manager that the investigation may be completed without law enforcement present. In these situations, DCS follows up with an additional report to law enforcement during the investigation if further information indicates criminal activity.
- **Law Enforcement Unavailable:** When the DCS case manager contacts law enforcement prior to the initial contact, there are times when law enforcement is unable to provide an officer or detective during the course of the investigation due to other incidents. In these situations, DCS follows up with an additional report to law enforcement if the initial contact further indicates criminal activity.
- **No Jurisdiction:** If the alleged victim or perpetrator lives on either a federal military installation or Native American reservation, DCS does not have jurisdiction and the case is transferred to the appropriate agency.

TABLE 4: REASONS WHY A JOINT INVESTIGATION DID NOT OCCUR

REASON THAT THE JOINT INVESTIGATION WAS NOT CONDUCTED						
County	Child Not Available	DCS Not Available	Law Enforcement Disagrees	Law Enforcement Unavailable	No Jurisdiction	Total
APACHE	0	0	3	1	0	4
COCHISE	0	0	6	2	0	8
COCONINO	1	0	13	3	0	17
GILA	0	0	3	1	1	5
GRAHAM	0	0	0	0	0	0
GREENLEE	0	0	0	0	0	0
LA PAZ	0	0	1	1	0	2
MARICOPA	10	11	188	29	1	239
MOHAVE	2	1	32	6	0	41
NAVAJO	0	0	15	3	2	20
PIMA	6	3	31	8	1	49
PINAL	1	2	7	0	0	10
SANTA CRUZ	0	0	0	0	0	0
YAVAPAI	1	2	29	4	0	36
YUMA	0	0	2	2	0	4
Total	21	19	330	60	5	435

It is anticipated that the number of CC reports jointly investigated according to the protocols will continue to rise as OCWI hires to its authorized staffing levels to meet statewide demand. Continued partnerships between law enforcement, DCS/OCWI provide opportunities for identifying and addressing systemic issues between the agencies.

There continues to be regular collaboration and communication with the agencies involved in the investigation of criminal conduct. This includes DCS, OCWI, law enforcement, prosecution, medical, victim advocates, and Advocacy Centers to strengthen the successful outcome of the investigation and provide comprehensive services. This is accomplished through regular multidisciplinary team meetings, case reviews, and co-location opportunities with law enforcement. Additionally, partnerships are being established in counties that do not have regular multidisciplinary team meetings or case reviews.