



STATE OF ILLINOIS
**OFFICE OF THE
 AUDITOR GENERAL**

Frank J. Mautino, Auditor General

SUMMARY REPORT DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

State Compliance Examination
 For the Two Years Ended June 30, 2024

Release Date: July 29, 2025

FINDINGS THIS AUDIT: 34				AGING SCHEDULE OF REPEATED FINDINGS			
	<u>New</u>	<u>Repeat</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Repeated Since</u>	<u>Category 1</u>	<u>Category 2</u>	<u>Category 3</u>
Category 1:	0	12	12	2022	3, 6	15, 21, 27, 28, 29, 31	
Category 2:	5	17	22	2020	2, 10, 11	16, 17, 18, 26	
Category 3:	0	0	0	2018	9, 12	19	
TOTAL	5	29	34	2016	5		
				2012	4, 7	14, 24	
				2010		23	
				2008		25	
				2002		30	
				1998	1, 8	13	
FINDINGS LAST AUDIT: 33							

SYNOPSIS

- **(24-04)** The Department of Children and Family Services (Department) failed to comply with several sections of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act during the examination period.
- **(24-05)** The Department did not comply with the Children and Family Services Act.
- **(24-08)** The Department did not timely initiate investigations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

Category 1: Findings that are **material weaknesses** in internal control and/or a **qualification** on compliance with State laws and regulations (material noncompliance).

Category 2: Findings that are **significant deficiencies** in internal control and **noncompliance** with State laws and regulations.

Category 3: Findings that have **no internal control issues but are in noncompliance** with State laws and regulations.

**FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE ABUSED AND
NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING ACT**

The Department of Children and Family Services (Department) failed to comply with several sections of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (Act) (325 ILCS 5) during the examination period.

We tested several sections of the Act and noted the following exceptions:

State’s attorneys’ offices were notified between 107 and 114 days from the date of the report

- The Department did not communicate to the State’s attorneys’ offices for 12 of 40 (30%) reports of child abuse and neglect for infants exposed to controlled substances tested. Additionally, the Department did not immediately communicate the investigation reports to the State’s attorneys’ offices for 3 of 40 (8%) reports tested. Specifically, we noted the State’s attorneys’ offices were notified between 107 to 114 days from report date.

The Directors of DPH and HFS were notified of a report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child alleged to have been abused or neglected while receiving care in a hospital 34 days to 8,122 days from the date of the investigation

- The Department notified the Director of DPH and HFS of the report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child alleged to have been abused or neglected while receiving care in a hospital 34 days to 8,122 days from the investigation date for 4 of 30 (13%) reports tested.
- The Department was required to file four reports during the examination period. The results of our testing indicated the Department failed to timely file one (25%) of the reports required. Specifically, we noted the report due on December 1, 2022, was submitted to the General Assembly one day late.

Schools were notified of completed investigations 3 to 848 days late

- During testing of 40 indicated reports, we noted the Department did not notify the child’s school for one (3%) completed investigation. Additionally, the Department did not timely notify the children’s school for 33 (83%) completed investigations. Specifically, we noted the schools were notified 3 to 848 days late.

Local law enforcement personnel and State’s attorney offices were notified of reports 4 to 270 days late

- During testing of 40 reports, we noted the following:
 - The Department did not timely notify local enforcement personnel and office of the State’s attorney of the involved county for 17 (43%) reports tested. Specifically, we noted the local enforcement personnel, and the office of the State’s attorney were notified 4 to 270 days late.
 - The Department did not notify the local enforcement and the office of the State’s attorney of the involved county for 5 (13%) reports tested.

Department did not notify required parties

- During testing of 40 reports, we noted for 10 (25%) reports tested, the Department did not notify the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the members of the Senate and House of Representatives in whose district the child's death or serious life-threatening injury occurred upon the completion of the report. Additionally, the Department did not provide timely notification upon the completion of one (3%) report. The notification was submitted 43 days after the 6 months' timeframe. (Finding 4, pages 25-30). **This finding has been reported since 2012.**

We recommended the Department perform the following:

- Immediately refer all reports of child abuse and neglect for a newborn infant whose blood, urine, or meconium contains any amount of a controlled substance to the appropriate State's attorney's office and to update procedures and provide training to staff to accomplish compliance with the Act.
- Notify the Director of DPH and HFS within a reasonable timeframe, when the Department receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, and the child is alleged to have been abused or neglected while receiving care in a hospital.
- Ensure the timely submission of all reports required by the Act to the General Assembly.
- Strengthen its monitoring procedures for investigators to ensure they notify and provide copy of its final findings from an indicated report of child abuse and neglect related to the child's school within 10 days of completing an investigation of alleged physical or sexual abuse of a student under the Act.
- Ensure local law enforcement personnel and the office of the State's attorney of the involved county of the receipt of any report alleging the death of a child or serious injury to a child are timely notified.
- Ensure the timely notification of all reports completed required by the Act to the President of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the members of the Senate and House of Representatives in whose district the child's death or serious life-threatening injury occurred.

Department agreed

The Department agreed with the recommendation. Please see the full State Compliance Examination Report for further details of the Department's response for each of the bullet points noted above.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

The Department of Children and Family Services (Department) did not comply with the Children and Family Services Act (Act) (20 ILCS 505).

We tested several sections of the Act and noted the following exceptions:

The Department did not properly document safety plans

- During our testing of 40 participants, we noted the following
 - For four (10%) participants tested, the Department was unable to provide a copy of the written safety plan.
 - For 13 (33%) participants tested, the safety plans were not reviewed and approved by the child protection supervisor.
 - For two (5%) participants tested, the Department was unable to provide documentation supporting it had provided the parent, guardian, or responsible adult caregiver with safety plan information on their rights and responsibilities.
 - For two (5%) participants tested, the safety plans were not signed by each parent/guardian/responsible adult caregiver and/or representative of the Department.
- There were no QA staff and Director of the Team designated to implement the training and Plans required by the Act, including the submission of the quarterly QA reports during the engagement period.

Visitation requests were not properly maintained

- During our testing of nine grandparent/great-grandparent visitation requests, we noted the following:
 - For two visitation requests (22%) tested, the Department was unable to provide documentation that would give evidence when the initial request of grandparent/great-grandparent visitation was received, as a result, the auditors were unable to determine if reasonable efforts were made within 45 calendar days.
 - For five visitation requests (56%) tested, the Department was unable to provide a copy of the written response sent to the requesting grandparent/great-grandparent, as a result, we were unable to determine if reasonable and diligent efforts were made within 45 calendar days
 - Eight of these nine visitation requests requested a clinical review, however, for two (25%) requests for a clinical review, the Department was unable to provide a copy of the written notice of recommendation and the basis for the recommendation to the requesting grandparent/great-grandparent, as a result, we were unable to determine if written notice was provided within 14 calendar days.

Reports were not submitted to the General Assembly timely

- During our testing of eight quarterly reports during the examination period, we noted one report (13%) was submitted to the General Assembly 18 days late.
- The required data from Fiscal Year 2022 and 2023 were not posted on the Department website.

Department was unable to proper documentation supporting the Department conducted required annual checks of service contracts

- During our testing of eight purchases of service contracts, the Department was unable to provide documentation supporting the Department conducted the required annual checks for two (25%) purchases of service contracts, therefore, the auditors were unable to test Department compliance with the required annual checks on the purchase of service agency and drivers.

Department did not timely conduct exit interviews

- During our testing of 40 exit interviews, the Department did not conduct the exit interview for 32 (80%) children in a timely manner. The exit interviews were performed between 19 to 402 days after the children left the foster homes. Additionally, the Department did not prepare and post the required quarterly reports summarizing the details of the exit interviews on the Department's webpage during the examination period.

- During our testing, we noted the Fiscal Year 2023 and Fiscal Year 2024 annual reports were submitted to the General Assembly 7 and 2 days late, respectively.

- During our testing, we noted the Fiscal Year 2024 report covered the evaluation of the Pat McGuire Child Welfare Education Fellowship Program (Program) for both Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, therefore the Fiscal Year 2023 report was submitted a year delayed.

For 50% of children tested, auditors were able to determine whether the Department explained to the youth their rights and responsibilities related to sibling visitation

- During our testing of 66 children from 23 family group cases with siblings staying at different locations, we noted the following
 - For six (9%) children tested, the Department was unable to provide the Sibling Visitation and Contact Plans
 - For 33 (50%) children tested, the Department did not provide the Form CFS 496-1, therefore, the auditors were unable to determine whether the Department has explained to the youth their rights and responsibilities related to sibling visitation.

Department did not timely process suggestions

- During our testing of 21 suggestions during the examination period, we noted six (29%) suggestions were documented and reviewed 14 to 57 days after the date of suggestion.(Finding 5, pages 31-40) **This finding has been reported since 2016.**

We recommended the Department perform the following:

- Ensure a signed written safety plan is provided to each parent or guardian and responsible adult caregiver participating in a safety plan, and the Department retain a copy of said safety plan.
- Adequately staff the Team to continue accomplishing the goals of the Error Reduction Implementation Plan.
- Ensure to maintain documentation of grandparent/great-grandparent visitation requests and the Department's written responses to such requests to corroborate if reasonable efforts were made by the Department.
- Ensure timely submission of all reports to the Governor and General Assembly required by the Act.
- Ensure to post on the Department website the court-approved transportation plan from the preceding fiscal years.
- Maintain monitoring documents of all annual checks conducted on the purchase of service agency and the drivers under the agency's employment.
- Ensure exit interviews are timely conducted with every child aged 5 and over who leaves a foster home and post on the Department website the required quarterly reports summarizing the details of the exit interview.
- Ensure Sibling Visitation and Contact Plans are developed when siblings are placed apart and permanency workers diligently review the Illinois Foster Child and Youth Bill of Rights (CFS 496-1 Form) with each child and provide a copy of the form to the child.
- Ensure suggestion boxes are timely opened and suggestions timely reviewed and addressed.

Department agreed

The Department agreed with the recommendation. Please see the full State Compliance Examination Report for further details of the Department's response for each of the bullet points noted above.

UNTIMELY INITIATION OF INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Department of Children and Family Services (Department) did not timely initiate investigations of child abuse and neglect within 24 hours of receipt of the report as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (Act).

Did not timely start investigations

The Department did not timely initiate an investigation for 342 of the 94,527 (0.36%) reports and for 354 of the 96,257 (0.37%) reports of child abuse and neglect in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, respectively.

After receiving the statistics above, we requested the Department to provide us a population of investigations initiated beyond 24 hours from receipt of the report during the examination period. The Department subsequently provided the

requested population generated from SACWIS, however, during our testing, we noted the listing included investigations that were initiated within 24 hours from receipt of the report. Due to this condition, we were unable to conclude the Department's population was sufficiently precise and detailed under the Professional Standards promulgated by the American Institute of Certified Accountants (AT-C § 205.36).

Even given the population limitations noted above which hindered the ability of the accountants to conclude whether selected samples were representative of the population as a whole, we selected 60 of the 696 investigations noted as not being initiated within 24 hours for further detailed testing in order to determine if the Department was meeting the 24-hour requirement or if the SACWIS data contained in the chart was incorrect. For 36 investigations sampled (60%), the Department did not meet the statutory 24-hour requirement. Specifically, we noted the Department initiated an investigation 0.02 hours to 142 days after the required timeframe. (Finding 8, pages 46-48). **This finding has been reported since 1998.**

We recommended the Department initiate investigations of all child abuse and neglect reports within the timeframe mandated by the Act and ensure complete and accurate information on initiation of investigations is maintained.

Department agreed

The Department agreed with the recommendation to initiate all child abuse and neglect reports within 24-hours of receiving the report as mandated by the Act. Of note, the Department's investigators did initiate the investigation within 24-hours 99.63% of the time, which is a testament to the hardworking staff and their commitment to compliance and serving the children of Illinois. The Department agrees to increase the percentage from 99.63% to 100% timely initiation.

OTHER FINDINGS

The remaining findings are reportedly being given attention by the Department. We will review the Department's progress towards the implementation of our recommendations in our next State compliance examination.

ACCOUNTANT'S OPINION

The accountants conducted a compliance examination of the Department for the two years ended June 30, 2024, as required by the Illinois State Auditing Act. The accountants qualified their report on State compliance for Findings 2024-001 through 2024-012. Except for the noncompliance described in these findings, the accountants stated the Department complied, in all material respects, with the requirements described in the report.

This compliance examination was conducted by Roth & Co. LLP.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

COURTNEY DZIERWA
Division Director

This report is transmitted in accordance with Section 3-14 of the Illinois State Auditing Act.

SIGNED ORIGINAL ON FILE

FRANK J. MAUTINO
Auditor General

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