

Questions for CPS Reports

Job Aid for CPS Designee using eWiSACWIS



This job aid assists you in gathering and documenting important information to help the agency decide if they need to contact the family to initiate an evaluation and determine if the reporter's concerns are legitimate. Your role is to know what information CPS needs, how to listen for it, what questions to ask, and where to document the information.

The following template serves as a guide to gather information from the reporter. It is vital that every section of the report is filled out to assess the current concern and decide what to do next. When CPS decides to initiate contact with the family to assess the concern, the information in the report helps the CPS professional determine the best approach to engage the family.

You can find detailed instructions on entering a CPS Report in eWiSACWIS here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/access/cps-report.pdf>.

Child Welfare Statutes and Standards mandate specific information items. Relevant questions are listed in each section to help you elicit necessary information. The sample questions are provided as a guide and support. It is not intended you ask every question. Check with your agency's CPS professional for direction. Please do not use shortcuts such as "N/A" or "not applicable" or "unknown". All documentation should let the reader know the question was asked and answered. An example would be "Reporter was asked about domestic violence and stated that they did not know." Anything highlighted in blue in eWiSACWIS is required. You will need to provide information before being allowed to go to the next textbox.

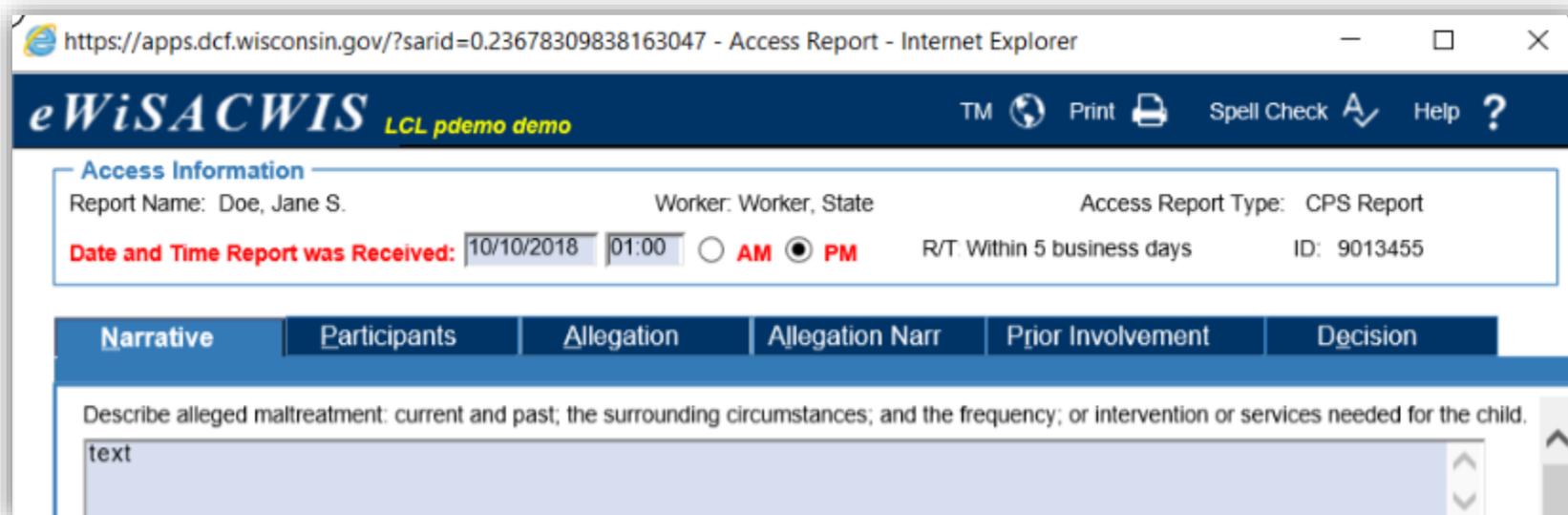
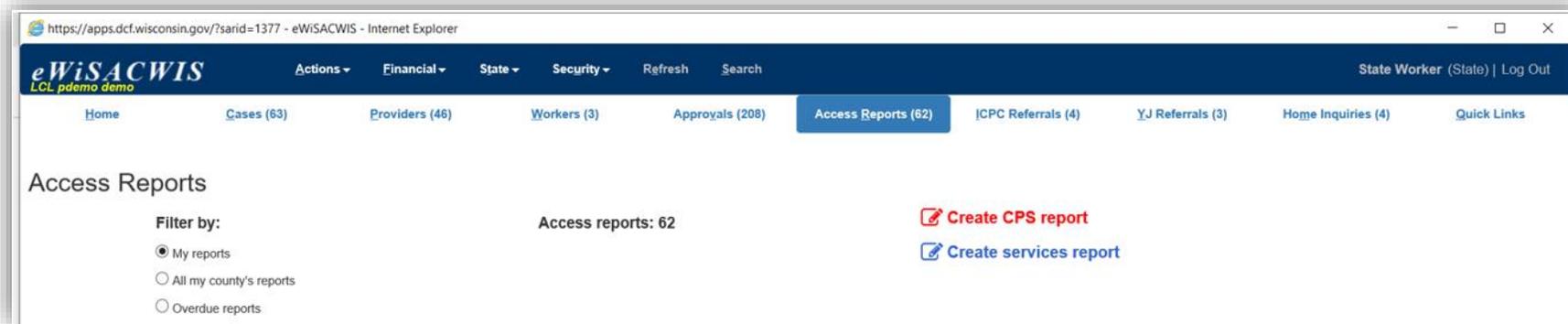
Whenever possible it is helpful to try and obtain the reporters name and contact information. If the caller wants to remain anonymous, they have that right.

Note: eWiSACWIS will ask you if there is Present and Likely Impending Danger Threats. eWiSACWIS defaults to a "no" response. That is correct.

As a designee you will not be asked to evaluate the report so do not select yes for either of these questions unless a CPS supervisor directs you differently. At the end of the CPS Report you will be asked to recommend a "screening decision." Select "screen in" so that the report advances to the CPS supervisor for evaluation.

Creating an Access Report

1. Select the Access Reports tab>Click Create CPS Report. This will open the Access Report Page.
2. Enter the date and time the report was received in the Access Information group box at the top of the page.



Tips

- Start by answering with a smile, convey warmth and security in your tone of voice.
- Count to 10 (silently) after asking a question. This gives the reporter time to think and respond.
- Soften your face and relax it so your voice has inflection and isn't tense or flat.
- Each interview must include responses to every item in the Access report. When a reporter does not know the answer, simply write "information unknown to the caller" to clarify the question was asked but did not know the information.

<p>Starting the Conversation</p> <p>Here is one way to start the call:</p>	<p>"Hello! You have reached _____ Child Protective Services. Do you have a concern about a child or children?"</p> <p>Ok, you've reached the right place. To ensure your concern is heard, I will ask you a series of questions that will help us make a sound decision about what to do next.</p> <p>The interview typically takes 20 minutes from start to finish. Will that work with your schedule?"</p> <p><i>When reporters do not have the time it will take, prioritize and ask about red flags for danger. Let the reporter know you will prioritize the questions and ask the most important ones right away (Maltreatment, Injury/Condition, and Child Functioning sections of the report).</i></p>
<p>Addressing the Reporter's Emotional Need</p>	<p>"It's common for people to experience a wide range of emotions during the interview. When someone is concerned about a child's safety it is typical to feel disappointed, frustrated, and relieved. Sometimes people feel all three at once. It's also common for people to tell me they feel guilty for calling or guilty for not calling sooner. All these feelings are ok.</p> <p>During the interview, please feel free to tell me what you need. For example, I've been asked to slow down, restate a question, or explain the reason for my question. Please don't hesitate to let me know what I can do. It's my job to support the most productive use of our time."</p>
<p>Engaging with the Reporter</p>	<p>"I want to provide some general information about CPS before we get started. Next, I'll share what to expect during and after our interview.</p> <p>First, Child Protective Services (CPS) is a specialized field of the Child Welfare System. My job today is to gather enough information to identify if a child may be unsafe, abused or neglected, or be at risk of abuse or neglect.</p>

	<p>Once I gather the information, I'll advance it to a CPS supervisor. The supervisor reviews the information and makes the decision about what to do next. For that reason, I will not be able to provide you with a decision at the end of the interview.</p> <p>Now, I have some questions to ask you that will help us better understand your concerns and what is going on with the family. I may need to stop you or ask for clarification on my end. If I do that, I intend to ensure I have complete information for our decision, not to interrupt you!"</p>
Narrative Tab	
Date and Time	It is vital that you note the date and time you are taking the report as this sets the timeframes for CPS response.
Alleged Maltreatment	<p>In this section you will describe current and past maltreatment, the surrounding circumstances, and the services needed.</p> <p>If the child is currently in out-of-home care, please note this.</p> <p>Gather as much information as you can.</p> <p>Make sure you ask clarifying questions when the caller makes vague comments; ask the reporter exactly what those statements mean.</p> <p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What do you have concerns about?" • "What have you observed (or heard) about the alleged maltreatment?" "Can you describe, in detail, the maltreatment (severe, multiple injuries, unexplained injuries, child unsupervised)?" • "Are there multiple alleged victims in the home?" • "Where did the alleged maltreatment occur?" • Dirty house reports are common but often hard to document. Ask the reporter when they saw the home last, what did they see, smell, feel. • If the report is about physical discipline, ask: "Under what circumstances is this kind of discipline used?" "Does the parent/caregiver use an object?" "Where on the body did they hit the child?" "Do they use this kind of discipline with all the children in the home or only a couple of them?" • Concerns about drug or alcohol use: "What substance is the adult using?" "How often are they using?" "Do they use at home or somewhere else?" "Where are the children when they are using?" "Do you know how the parent behaves when they are under the influence?" "When the parent is using is there another adult who can shield the child from the effects of the parent's use?"

		<p><i>Surrounding circumstances</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What, in your view, are the worst aspects of the behavior you are describing?” • “What do you think is the cause of the problem?” • “Does another parent/caregiver in the home know about the maltreatment? How have they responded?” <p><i>Intervention or services needed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I hear you saying that things are not right with this family. What would have to happen for you to know that the problems had been resolved and you no longer had to worry?” • “You probably thought long and hard before calling us. In your opinion, what would it take to make a difference for these children?”
Child’s injury or condition	Get details about injuries or condition that may be present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Can you describe the injury in detail including size, location, color?” “Is it a bruise, laceration, scrape, cut, burn?” • “Has the child received medical treatment?” “Do they need medical attention?”
Child’s location and functioning	Child functioning should include the child’s day to day life at school, home or with family and friends. Make sure that you are gathering information about every child in the home regardless of if they are an identified victim or if they are related to the family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Where does the child attend school/daycare?” “Do you know what days/times they are there?” • “Is the child at grade level?” • “Do any of the children have special needs or disabilities?” “If yes, can you describe them?” “How do their needs affect their functioning?” • “Do they have friends?” • “What concerns do you have about their development?” • “What are the visitation schedule details?”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You said that the child always seems ‘miserable’ and ‘withdrawn’. Are there any times when you have seen them come out of her shell?” “What are they like then?” • “If this problem is solved, what difference will it make for the child(ren)? How will their lives be different?” • “What do the children say they want to be different?” “Or if they haven’t said, what would they say if you asked them?” • If parents are in separate household get details about visitation schedule and when the child(ren) will see the other parent next.
Present Danger	Leave this field at Default (no). Follow agency direction as to how to proceed if you believe there is danger.	Present Danger indicates something is happening or not happening that will cause severe harm to the child. Notify someone right away if you think there is present danger. The CPS Professional will make the decision. Use the Red Flags for Danger Job Aid to identify reports you should take directly to the CPS professional.
Records Checks Note: You must gather information on everyone in the home who is 17 years of age or older. If no relevant information found, document that checks were completed.	CPS History: In eWiSACWIS go to the “Prior Involvement” Tab Check the CPS history for information about family and alleged maltreater. Consolidated Court Automated Program (CCAP) Search This is a criminal record search. Go to www.wicourts.gov ; click on “I agree”. Type in the last name and first name of each household member over 17 years of age to complete search. If someone has a common name, be sure to	This is found on the Prior Involvement Tab . See below. Note felonies and misdemeanors and/or felony charges of any kind and note any details found.

	crosscheck spellings and birth dates.	
	Sex Offender Registry – Reverse Address Check Go to www.offender.doc.state.wi.us/public ; Click on “I agree”. Complete a Name Search. Complete a Geographical Search.	Note anyone who is found and what their charges were.
Access to the Child Note: This refers specifically to the alleged maltreater.	Be sure to ask specifically when the alleged maltreater will have access to the child whether it is ongoing because they reside together other will be contact in the coming days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the alleged maltreater’s access over the next five business days. • “Do they live with the family?” • “Do they provide direct care to the child?” • “Are there Family Court custody arrangements?” “Do you know what they are?”
Changes in Circumstances	These are changes that may make it difficult for the CPS workers to see the family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May include worker safety concerns • Information that family is homeless or transient or has plans to move.
Domestic Violence	Include current and past domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you know if anyone else in the home besides the child has been hurt or assaulted?” “If yes, who?” • “Have the police ever been called to the house to stop fighting among the family members?” “If yes, tell me about that.” • “Have the children said that one of their caregivers is a victim of violence or is acting violently in the home?” • “Do family members appear to be afraid of or intimidated by the alleged maltreater?” • “Have you witnessed an argument and sensed that it was escalating?” <p>If the answers to the above four questions indicate the presence of domestic violence in the home, or if it appears that a family member is</p>

		<p>violent, aggressive, or controlling, these additional questions can assist with assessing the risk of danger to family members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Has the violence changed or increased over time?” “How often does it happen?” • “Has anyone made threats to hurt or kill him/herself, another family member or pets?” • “Do you know if there any weapons in the home?” “If yes, what kinds?” “Who had access?” • “Has the violent parent or caregiver threatened to run off with the child(ren) or threatened to take full custody of the child(ren)?” • “Are you aware of circumstances in which the parent/caregiver has been criticized or threatened for seeking help or community resources, such as medical, mental health, parenting assistance, childcare, legal action etc.?” • “Has a family member stalked another family member?” “Has anyone ever taken a family member hostage?”
<p>Family Response</p>	<p>This is another space to note any worker safety concerns.</p>	<p>Family Response to Intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is the family aware the report is being made?” • “How might the family respond to a CPS professional?” • “Do you have concerns for the CPS professional’s safety?” • “Is there another agency or resource that would do a better job than us?” “Or that the family would receive better?” • “If no, do you know of another agency or resources that CPS can partner with to help this family?” <p>Parental Protective Capacities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You mentioned that it is not always like this. Can you tell me what is happening when the situation is OK?” “What is different about those times?”

		<p><i>Cognitive- what the parent thinks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are the parents concerned about this problem?” “How do you know they are concerned?” “What have they already done to try and resolve it?” “What do you think they will try next?” <p><i>Behavioral- what the parent does</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It sounds like this has happened before. What have you seen the family do to sort this out in the past?” • “What have you seen this Mom/Dad do that let you know they are protective of their child(ren) and can keep them safe?” • “Are there times when they call on other people to help solve problems?” “When do they do that?” “Who do they call on most often?” <p><i>Emotional- what the parent feels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are there times when the parent/caregiver is attentive and nurturing rather than what you’re concerned about?” “Tell me more about those times.” “What have you seen the parent or child do instead?” “What do you think contributed to the parent’s/caregiver’s ability to be protective during those times?”
<p>Reporter’s Motivation for calling at this time.</p>	<p>Document the reporter’s motivation and source of information, if possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What prompted you to call today?” • “How do you know the information?” • “How is this behavior or pattern a problem for you?” • “Does the family see you as someone who would have their best interest in mind?” • “Have you done anything (other than notifying us) to address the problem?”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This situation sounds serious. What do you think should happen?” “How would that solve this problem?” • “What difference will it make for you if the problem is resolved?”
Other People	<p>If this report is advanced for further assessment, the next CPS professional completes an assessment to determine if the child is unsafe. For that reason, we ask the reporter about other peoples who might have information on the family.</p> <p>Document the names and contact information of other people who may have information regarding the child or family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are there other people who may have information that is helpful?” “Do you have their contact information?” • “I’m curious who else might have more information about this family?” • “Which other adults in this child(ren)’s life shares your concerns?” • “Would other people who know the family agree with your perspective?” • “Who knows the family better than you do?”
American Indian Heritage	<p>It is required to ask if the child(ren) have any known American Indian heritage.</p> <p>An eWiSACWIS record check for child’s American Indian heritage and tribe can be done.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you have reason to believe the child or family has American Indian ancestry, or is enrolled with the tribe?” • “If yes, which tribes and where?” • If reporter has no information note, “Reporter was asked and indicated they did not know.” <p>Note: Tribes must be notified within 24 hours of receiving information, regardless of screening decision. When Menominee tribe is identified they must be sent the CPS report.</p>
Directions to the house	If known, directions to the house.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Where does the child live?”
Participant Tab		
Household Members Access Participants	<p>Enter the full name, age, birth date, gender, race and ethnicity and relationship and role in the household. You must identify an Alleged Victim, Report Name and Reporter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are there any family or friends who temporarily call this residence home?” • “Does anyone stay occasionally?” • “Are there any other children who are in the home even if it is not every day (shared custody)?”

<p>Click the Add/Edit button to search the participants in the CPS Report.</p>	<p>For the person making the report, do not select additional roles beyond “Reporter” unless that person is a member of the household.</p> <p>Check for accurate spellings, ages, addresses, and phone numbers.</p> <p>Be certain to note how each person is either related or knows one another.</p> <p><i>It is vital to get the family’s address and phone number.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do any of the children in the household have a parent who lives at a different address?”
<p>Reporter Information</p>	<p>While reporters are kept confidential, their contact information is important. If a reporter wants to remain anonymous, it is fine.</p>	<p>“Could I please have your contact information? We keep your name confidential. Sometimes there are additional questions and someone at the agency may contact you.”</p>
<p>Allegation Tab: On the Allegation page, select an Alleged Victim from the drop-down.</p>		
<p>Alleged Victim</p>	<p>Gather who the alleged victim is and how the alleged maltreater is related to them.</p>	<p>You will need to categorize the alleged maltreatment as Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse or Emotional Abuse.</p>
<p>Allegation Detail</p>	<p>Record where and when the incident occurred. Enter the date or approximate date of the alleged maltreatment.</p>	<p>If the allegations are regarding a child who is already in out-of-home care, please note that.</p>
<p>Allegation Narration</p>		
<p>Primary Allegation Narrative</p> <p>(parent, guardian, legal custodian, sibling, foster parent or anyone living in the child’s dwelling)</p>	<p>Concerns of maltreatment in the home where the child resides is considered a Primary case. If the child has more than one residence (i.e. parents share custody) the report should be written on the home where the maltreatment occurred. If the reporter does not know</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather as much information as you can regarding the alleged maltreatment. • Make sure you ask clarifying questions when the reporter makes “vague” comments. Ask the reporter exactly what they mean. • Find out the child’s current location. Are they expected to be somewhere other than home over the next few days?

	<p>who the alleged maltreater is the case will always be a Primary Caregiver case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you gather information about every child in the house whether or not they were identified as a victim.
<p>Parent or Adult</p>	<p>In the event that you are gathering information about alleged maltreatment in the family home you will need to ask questions about the adults in the home: do they work, what is their schedule, how do they function as an adult and parent; are there known mental health disorders or alcohol/drug concerns.</p>	<p><i>Current location</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Where are the parents now?” <p><i>Functioning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Will the parent/caregiver of this child agree with your assessment of the situation?” • “You described this Mom/Dad as ‘angry’ and ‘abusive’. Are there times you have seen them be playful, sweet or nurturing to their children?” “What is different about them then?” “What type of situations are they at their best?” • “What lets you know that Mom/Dad are doing their very best?” <p><i>Parenting practice/views of children</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If you were to imagine the parent giving advice to a new mother or father. What would they say is most important for a new parent to know about parenting?” • “From your knowledge of the parent, how did they learn to parent?” • “How would the parent describe their child to a new teacher?” • “What have you seen or heard that tells you about the parent’s relationship with the child?”
<p>Family Functioning</p>		<p><i>Family Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What do you see as positive about the relationship between these parents and their children?” • “How does this family usually solve problems?” “What have you seen them doing?” “What are they good at getting out of?”

		<p><i>Current Stressors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What do you think this family needs to do to protect their children?” “Are the parents capable of doing that?” “Do they have the resources (financial, emotional support, etc.) to make a change?” • “Are there aspects of your relationship with the family that, in coordination with our involvement or other community services, might help to influence them for the better?” • “What do you imagine we could do to improve this situation?”
Impending Danger Threats	Leave this field at Default (no).	<p>Note: As a designee you will not be asked to interview the reporter about likely impending danger threats. However, if you receive information during the interview about a potential red flag for danger then enter that here.</p> <p>Use the <i>Red Flags for Danger Job Aid</i> to identify reports you should take directly to the CPS professional.</p>
Alleged maltreater	Document the name of the alleged maltreater and the relationship to the child. How they are related to the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Who is the alleged maltreater?” • “Who is the alleged victim(s)?” • “How is the alleged maltreater related to the child?” • “When and where did the incident occur?” • If the child is in out-of-home care, note that.
Secondary (relatives not living in the home, childcare staff, youth justice center, residential facility staff, teachers)	<p>These are concerns about an adult in the child’s life who does not share the same home.</p> <p>You will have to note in the report the answers to the questions regarding the parents.</p>	<p>Check with the CPS professional to confirm case type.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are the parents aware of the alleged maltreater?” • “Did they parents contributed to the alleged maltreatment in any way?” • “How they have responded if they are aware?”
Non-Caregiver (family friend; stranger; neighbor; peer)	This alleged maltreater has not supervised the child or exercised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are the parents aware of the alleged maltreater?” • “Did the parents contribute to the alleged maltreatment in any way?”

	control over them. They have never lived with the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How they have responded if they are aware?”
Prior Involvement Tab		
Previous CPS History	The Prior Involvement Tab is a view only tab with columns that can be sorted and hyperlinks to the Access Report and Initial Assessment pages. The system will automatically search all participants in the Access Report and return any prior involvement.	
Decision Tab		
Worker Recommendation	At the end of the report, you will be asked to recommend a “screening decision”. Select “Screen In” so the report advances to the CPS supervisor for evaluation. If you think there are red flags for danger, contact a CPS professional.	
Ending the Call Here is one way to end a call:	<p>“Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. Like I mentioned earlier, it is my job to gather enough information to identify if a child may be unsafe, abused or neglected, or be at risk of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>Your job of notifying CPS of your concern is done; however, I’d like to gather some final information on what you think should happen next.</p> <p>Thank you for your ideas. Like I mentioned earlier, I will now advance the information to a CPS supervisor for review. The CPS supervisor decides within 24 hours of this interview, sometimes sooner when the situation is urgent. If I need additional information from you to help us decide, what is the best phone number to reach you at?</p> <p>Ok, before we end the interview, what remaining questions do you have for me?”</p>	