

Child Protective Services – Introduction

2101.4 Distinctive Characteristics

Child Protective Services is:

- **Legally required** specialized social services to families where there is suspected and/or substantiated child maltreatment;
- **Goal-oriented** to assess (investigate) reports of maltreatment, ensure protection and safety and provide services to remedy substantiated maltreatment; and
- **Time-limited** social services that address both symptoms and causes of the maltreatment.

Distinctive characteristics of Child Protective Services:

- A request for protective services usually comes from someone, other than the parents, in the form of a complaint or report of suspected or known abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- Protective services must be initiated by the county department in the interest of a reportedly maltreated child, although the parents do not initiate/request help;
- When maltreatment is substantiated, protective services continues until the maltreatment is reduced or absent and the child is protected and safe;
- Law enforcement involvement or court action may be initiated against the parents' wishes to ensure the protection and safety of the child; and,
- CPS decisions require critical thinking and decision-making that assertively protect children from abuse and neglect, while respecting a parent's right to rear a child without government interference.