



Parents' Bill of Rights

Under Tennessee law anyone who believes a child has been abused or neglected must report it to DCS or a law enforcement agency.

The law requires DCS to investigate the report and DCS cannot tell you who made the report. DCS does not arrest people.

The DCS case manager will talk to the child, siblings, other people living in the home and you. The case manager may also need to also talk to the child's doctor, school staff, child care provider, neighbors or other family members.

To protect the child, sometimes the child is temporarily removed. You, your family, your church family or anyone you choose can help decide with DCS on a plan for where the child can live during the investigation.

The investigation should be completed within 60 days.

If your child is removed, you have the right to be told the reasons why your child was removed.

If your child is removed, you have the right to visit your child unless the court says that you cannot.

If your child is removed, you have the right to a hearing within three days of the removal.

You have the right to come to court, with or without a lawyer, to tell the court why you believe your child should not be removed.

If the court agrees with DCS, you have the right to appeal the decision to a higher court.

You have the right to ask the court to return your child to you after completing required tasks agreed to by DCS, you and the court.

You can contact your local legal services or Legal Aid office if you cannot afford a lawyer.

You have the right to have the findings of the investigation explained to you.

You have the right to appeal the investigation findings and that appeal process explained to you.

You have the right to receive in writing the findings of the investigation.

