united for our children

Child Protection System Information for Parents

Why have I been given this Information Sheet? Abu Dhabi Family Care Authority

- You have been given this Information Sheet because someone has made a report to the Abu Dhabi Family Care Authority (FCA) about the safety or wellbeing of your child.
- Abu Dhabi law requires Child Protection Specialists (CPS) to investigate this report. Our job is to find out if your child is 'in need of care and protection', and, if so, to help your child and family.
- Our officers understand that it can be distressing and confusing to have Child Protection involved with your family. We will keep you informed about what is happening and why. We will also involve you in making decisions that are in your child's best interests.

What does 'in need of care and protection' mean?

- A child may be 'in need of care and protection' if the parents of the child are unable or unwilling to look after the child properly. This means not providing the child with what they need to be happy and healthy, and/or not protecting the child from emotional, physical, or sexual maltreatment.

What does Child Protection do?

- Every child in Abu Dhabi has the right to be happy, healthy, and safe.
- The FCA's Child Protection arm is the government agency responsible for investigating and protecting children who have been, are being, or at risk of being, neglected and/or emotionally, physically, or sexually maltreated.
- Child Protection is part of a multi-sectoral, coordinated child protection system designed to protect all Abu Dhabi children. This means that Child Protection works closely and in partnership with several other Government and community organizations to help keep children safe, and to assist families to look after their children.
- Some of the other organizations that Child Protection works with include those providing social support and protection such as health, accommodation, and education.

Who made the report to Child Protection about my child?

- Anyone can make a report to FCA about any child they think might need help.
- The law does not allow FCA to tell you who made the report, unless that person gives consent.

What happens next?

- After talking with you today, we may need to investigate your child's situation further.
- If so, we may arrange more visits to talk with you, your family, and your child. While the first visit may be in a FCA office, a CPS may also make a home visit. We treat home visits with the utmost sensitivity.
- We may also speak with other people who may have information or ideas about how we can best help your family and your child (for example: other family members, teachers, doctors, the police, community workers, other organizations).
- We may also:
    - Arrange for a doctor or other specialist to examine your child

- Arrange a case conference for agencies to review the services available to your child and family, and to discuss the most suitable services to uphold the best interest of the child. Case conferences will be attended by the Case Manager, the Case Supervisor, other social workers working on the case, representatives from agencies providing services to the child and family, and the child and family where possible.
- Refer you and your child to a family service or other specialist service
- Undertake a Child and Family Assessment.

What is a Child and Family Assessment?

- After completing our initial investigation, we may undertake a Child and Family Assessment.
- A Child and Family Assessment is a comprehensive assessment of your family's current situation, including an assessment of any risks that may be present in your child's life as well as existing strengths and protective mechanisms that can be leveraged.
- The Assessment will include a detailed Case Plan that outlines the steps that need to be taken to reduce any identified risks, as well as who is responsible for making sure that the Case Plan is followed.
- It normally takes about two or three weeks for us to complete an Assessment. Your participation is critical to this process, and we take the wishes and feelings of the involved children into consideration. We will provide you with a copy of the Assessment report once it is finished and discuss its contents and recommendations with you.

What will happen if I don't want to talk with Child Protection?

- You may choose not to talk with Child Protection, but we will still have to investigate the report.
- If you do talk with us about your situation, we will better understand what has happened and will be able to better help you and your child.

What are my child's rights?

- The most important right your child has is the right to be happy, healthy, and safe.- This right is protected by Wadeema's Law and the Abu Dhabi Child Protection Policy
- If your child is unable to be happy, healthy, and safe in your care, they have a right to be cared for by someone else until it is safe for them to be returned to your care.
- Your child also has the right to have a say about what happens in their life, and to have their views and wishes listened to and respected by Child Protection. -This right is also protected by Wadeema's Law and the Abu Dhabi Child Protection Policy.

What are my rights as a parent or primary caregiver?

- As the parent or primary caregiver, you have several rights, including the right:
  - to care for your child, unless that right has been removed by a court or other authorised entity
  - -to make decisions about your child and family, unless that right has been removed by a court or other authorised entity
- You also have the right:
  - to be kept informed about what decisions Child Protection (or any other organisation or person) is making about your child and family, and why those decisions are being made
  - to ask Child Protection (or any other organisation or person) questions about what is happening, and to have those questions answered

- to seek independent legal advice and assistance

Can Child Protection remove my child from my care?

- Yes. If Child Protection ever believes that your child is not safe at home with you, they may take steps to have your child removed from your care. Separating a child from their family is always a last resort and a decision taken to protect the safety of your child.
- If this happens, we will give you extra written information about your rights and what you can do.

Will the police become involved?

- Maybe. If Child Protection ever believes that you have hurt your child, or that you have committed any other offence, they may notify the police.
- If this happens, we will give you extra written information about your rights and what you can do.

Will Child Protection share my information about my child or family with anyone else?

- If we arrange assistance for your child or family, information may be given to that organization or person to help them provide the best service for your child or family.
- Organizations or people that we may give information to include those providing support for health, accommodation, education, substance abuse, financial, disability, police, and legal issues.
- The privacy of your child and family is a high priority (and is also legally protected under Abu Dhabi law), and any information that is shared will treated respectfully and in confidence by the organization or person receiving the information.

Where can I get more information?

- It is important that you understand what is happening and why CPS are visiting your family. If you don't understand, ask them to explain.
- If you still do not understand what is happening after talking with the officers, you can contact Child Protection on [NUMBER HERE].

Contact information

- The name of the CPS who visited your home is: [BLANK SPACE HERE]
- Their contact number is: [BLANK SPACE HERE]
- If at any time you are concerned about the safety of your child, contact the Abu Dhabi Police: 999