

**DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMO #9-2010**

DATE: October 28, 2010

To: Children and Family Services Specialists, Supervisors, Administrators and Service Area Administrators

From: Ed Matney, Policy Section Administrator 

Approved by: Todd L. Reckling, Director 

Re: Mandatory Collateral Calls at Intake

Effective: Immediately

Duration: Until revised

Contact: Suzanne Schied, CFS Program Specialist, Children and Family Services, Policy Section at 402-471-9245 or Suzanne.schied@nebraska.gov or
Lindy Bryceson, Administrator, Children and Family Services, Policy Section at 402-471-9733 or lindy.bryceson@nebraska.gov

Purpose: This memo formalizes Intake practice which requires that collateral calls be made prior to not accepting (screening out) a report for initial safety assessment in specific situations.

Process: There will be *mandatory collateral calls and comprehensive record checks* done prior to screening out any intakes that involve parents:

- Under the age of 25;
- Who are alleged to have a mental health diagnosis;
- Who are alleged to be using methamphetamine;
- Who are a former state ward;
- Who are alleged to be involved in a relationship involving domestic violence, including situations that involve a boyfriend of the mother to the children; or
- Who have a criminal history involving violent crimes.

Because the above factors have been linked to child deaths, it is imperative to have complete information before a decision is made to not accept a report of child abuse or neglect for assessment. A collateral call may include a call to law enforcement to gather information about past criminal violations, law enforcement contacts to the residence, and/or reports of domestic violence in the home. For school age children, a call can be made to the school to inquire about the health and overall wellbeing of the child, or any concerns noted by staff. Other sources of information will be contacted as appropriate.

All N-FOCUS program narratives will be reviewed and documented for the purpose of making a screening decision.

Reports of child abuse or neglect involving parents with severe mental illness will not be screened out on the basis of the parent being hospitalized or receiving treatment.