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What Every Parent Should Know About Child Protective Services

Posted by [Cheryl Bailey](#)

It only takes [one prying neighbor](#), one misunderstood melt down in the middle of Walmart for a parent to be suspected to child abuse, or neglect. Yes, it happened to me once too while on vacation. So what should parents know about CPS and how do you protect yourself and your child should you find yourself being questioned? In a nut shell are eight facts.



1. **Legally Obligated to Investigate.** Every case must be looked into. That does not mean a full investigation, but rather the facts will be checked within 24-72 hours. A case can end at this point if there seems to be no real basis to a claim or that no abuse is really occurring. A neighbor may report that a child is home alone every afternoon after school, but CPS may learn that while yes the child is home alone, they are old enough, not seven like the neighbor thought. If a child, other family members and at least 10 other adults make a report, then no matter what an investigation will take place.
2. **You have rights.** When CPS knocks on your door, you have the right to ask what the rules and laws are for your state and to see a copy. You have the right not to speak to anyone at this time, until you have reviewed your rights. You have the right to contact an attorney first and talk with CPS a few days later after you know where you stand and you are ready to talk.
3. **You do not have to open your door.** You come home from a hard day at work and CPS knocks on the door. You do not have to open the door to let them in, nor do they have the right to come in and search your home. You may step outside and have a conversation with them if you wish. Only in an extreme case where danger is suspected may a CPS worker call police for a search warrant to check the home.
4. **Screening Questions ask by CPS.** You will be asked questions that make you feel as if your entire life is on display. Questions may range from your own childhood, past and present relationships, drug use, finances, even abortion is not off the table. While these questions may have nothing to do with what brought your attention to CPS, this question time is used to pry and find any other issues that were not in the original complaint. Such heavy questioning is used to uncover facts that are truly related to events that do warrant intervention. Example, while you may not know your neighbor is selling drugs,

and you allow your child to go over and play at their house, the child might reveal something about the neighbor while questioning is going on.

5. **Drug Test.** Yes, you can be asked to take a drug test. No you do not have to.
6. **Removal and Placement.** These are not the same things. Removal takes place when a child is removed from the home and placed in foster care. Usually a lot of behind the scenes work has happened before a social worker steps in and makes a swift removal. Placement is when you are asked to let another family member care for your child until the situation that is questionable can be resolved and you can again regain full custody of your child.
7. **CPS can talk to my child without me knowing.** Yes they can and here is why. CPS wants to get to your child before you do. Now if you have done nothing, your child has nothing to fear nor should you. CPS talks to children first so that the child cannot be coached on what not to say or what to say, cannot be threatened or made to fear that they will be taken and never see a their family again or such. CPS usually talks to a child at school or other location where the child is not near the parent.
8. **CPS may actually help.** While you did not draw any attention to your child, your situation or your needs, CPS does have extensive knowledge about services, grants, and help that may help your family situation work better. A family who had land lord issues turned the situation around by using the case worker who had been called to investigate them, to help them find better, safer and more understanding living conditions for their disabled child.

Disclaimer: I am not a legal advisor nor am I a social worker. My contact with CPS has always been positive and helpful for both myself and for parents of special need children. It is because I have been called into question on the behalf of other parents that I am choosing to write on this subject matter. I know first hand how quickly parents of special needs children find themselves being investigated for failure to properly supervise educate, dress or even care for their special needs child. This post is meant to be a guide and answer questions concerning parental rights where children are concerned.

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Jessica Lynn Hepner on June 3, 2013 at 1:38 PM

Hi I am the owner of What Every Parent Should Know About Child Protection Services

<http://whateveryparentshouldknowaboutcps.blogspot.com>

I just wanted to say it is good to see us all fighting for the same worthy cause. Way Too Go!

↩ Reply

Cheryl Bailey on June 4, 2013 at 5:18 PM

Thank you so much for reading and stopping by Jessica!! You are truly a wealth of information and help!

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