# Mohave County Attorney's Office

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## MOHAVE COUNTY ATTORNEY ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION OF CHILD ABUSE PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §8-817(B)(8)

Under A.R.S. §8-817(B)(8) there is a requirement that every County develop, adopt, and implement protocols to guide the investigations of allegations involving criminal conduct with respect to children. Please find attached a copy of the protocol that Mohave County has developed over the years, with this draft adopted in 2007.

In the fiscal year starting July 1, 2022 and ending on June 30, 2023 Mohave County investigated 72 cases involving child abuse and 92 cases involving child sexual abuse. Of these 72 cases involving child abuse, there were 59 cases that were investigated jointly pursuant to our attached protocol. Those cases that were not investigated jointly involve cases involving Aggravated DUI's where a child was present in the vehicle and cases where the child abuse was not committed in the child victim's home. Of the 92 cases involving child sexual abuse, which includes sexual conduct with a minor, molestation of a child, and attempted offenses involving the same crimes, 77 of these cases were investigated jointly, and the majority of the remaining cases were not investigated jointly because the molestation or sexual abuse did not occur in the home or was not perpetrated by individuals living with the victim. Those cases where the victim and perpetrator lived together are cases that mandate DCS involvement. As stated in past reports, DCS is only involved in cases where the child's family, parents or guardians are the potential perpetrators.

However, there were no known cases where a joint investigation between law enforcement and DCS did not take place during this last fiscal year. In the past law enforcement has reported that they do get frustrated using the DCS hotline, particularly when they are put on hold for an extended period of time. However, this year there have not been any cases to my knowledge that were not investigated jointly when said investigation should have taken place. We do have a local task force that is composed of members of the Mohave County Attorney's Office, DCS, and local law enforcement agencies. Those agencies continue to work together to try to ensure that children have to give as few interviews as possible and that the cases are investigated in a way that causes the least amount of trauma to the child victims and their families.

Of the 72 child abuse cases presented for review, approximately 54 of them resulted in at least one criminal charge being filed and 44 of these cases resulted in at least one conviction for a criminal offense. Of course, some of those cases are still pending and have not been closed yet. Of the approximate 92 child sexual abuse cases presented to the Mohave County Attorney's Office for review, 70 of these cases

resulted in a criminal charge and 59 of those cases resulted in a criminal conviction for at least one criminal offense. Again, some of these cases are still pending and will not be resolved until the next fiscal year.

Please feel free to contact me at (928) 753-0719 if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Smith
Mohave County Attorney

Enclosure (Mohave County Children's Justice Task Force Protocol)

MJS/cle

cc:

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