

# Vermont's Child Protection Registry: Information for Victims & Their Families

**We want to tell you about the review process when allegations of abuse or neglect are substantiated and what it may mean for you.**

When the Department for Children and Families (DCF) investigates a report of child abuse or neglect, we must decide whether there is enough information to prove the person abused or neglected the child.

If the answer is YES, the report is substantiated. Each substantiated person is sent a letter informing them that:

- ▶ They have been substantiated.
- ▶ They have 30 days to request a review to challenge the substantiation.
- ▶ Their name will be added to the Child Protection Registry unless they request a review in the time allowed and the substantiation is overturned.
- ▶ If their name is added to the registry, they may be able to request a review to have it removed (expunged) after it's been on a certain number of years.

## What is the process to challenge a substantiation?

- 1.** An independent reviewer meets with the person and anyone they choose to bring for support.
- 2.** The reviewer considers the DCF investigative file and information presented at the meeting. **Neither you nor the child will be involved in this part.**
- 3.** The reviewer may:
  - ⇒ Uphold the substantiation
  - ⇒ Overturn it
  - ⇒ Direct DCF to reopen the investigation
- 4.** If the substantiation is upheld:
  - ⇒ The person's name is added to the registry.
  - ⇒ They have the right to appeal the decision to the Human Services Board (HSB). **You and/or the child may be involved in this part.**
  - ⇒ If they appeal, the HSB will either uphold or overturn the decision.
  - ⇒ If it's upheld, the person may then appeal to the Vermont Supreme Court. Its decision is final.
- 5.** We'll reach out to you if the substantiation is overturned through the appeal process.