

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Family Law

5-714.

(a) The Social Services Administration and each local department may maintain a central registry of cases reported under this subtitle.

(b) (1) The respective local departments throughout this State shall provide the information for a central registry.

(2) Except for identifying information authorized under subsection (d) of this section, a central registry may not include information from a local department case file until any individual found responsible for indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect has:

(i) been found guilty of any criminal charge arising from the alleged abuse or neglect;

(ii) unsuccessfully appealed the finding in accordance with the procedures established under § 5-706.1 of this subtitle; or

(iii) failed to exercise the appeal rights within the time frames specified in § 5-706.1 of this subtitle, Title 10, Subtitle 2 of the State Government Article, or the Maryland Rules.

(c) The information in a central registry shall be at the disposal of:

(1) the protective services staff of the Social Services Administration;

(2) the protective services staffs of local departments who are investigating a report of suspected abuse or neglect; and

(3) law enforcement personnel who are investigating a report of suspected abuse or neglect.

(d) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, and subject to subsection (e) of this section, a central registry may contain identifying information related to an investigation of abuse or neglect.

(2) A central registry may not contain identifying information related to an investigation of abuse or neglect if:

(i) abuse or neglect has been ruled out; or

(ii) the abuse or neglect finding has been expunged in accordance with § 5-707(b)(1) of this subtitle.

(e) (1) The Department or a local department may identify an individual as responsible for abuse or neglect in a central registry only if the individual:

(i) has been found guilty of any criminal charge arising out of the alleged abuse or neglect; or