

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

## **LEGISLATIVE BILL 503**

Introduced by Coash, 27.

Read first time January 23, 2013

Committee: Judiciary

### A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to child abuse or neglect; to amend sections  
2 28-710, 28-713, 28-714, 28-715, 28-716, 28-717, 28-719,  
3 28-723, 28-725, 28-727, 29-4304, and 43-2932, Reissue  
4 Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 28-711,  
5 28-713.01, 28-720, 28-726, 28-728, 43-4318, and 43-4331,  
6 Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012; to rename  
7 the Child Protection Act; to provide for alternative  
8 response to a report of child abuse or neglect; to define  
9 terms; to state intent; to provide for demonstration  
10 projects and expansion; to provide duties for the  
11 Department of Health and Human Services; to harmonize  
12 provisions; and to repeal the original sections.

13 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1                   Section 1. Section 28-710, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3                   28-710 (1) Sections 28-710 to 28-727 and sections 2 to 7  
4 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Child Protection  
5 and Family Safety Act.

6                   (2) For purposes of the Child Protection and Family  
7 Safety Act:

8                   (a) Alternative response means a comprehensive assessment  
9 of (i) the risk of subsequent child abuse or neglect, (ii) family  
10 strengths and needs, and (iii) the provision of or referral for  
11 necessary services. Alternative response does not include an  
12 investigation or a formal determination as to whether child abuse or  
13 neglect has occurred;

14                   (b) Assessment means a comprehensive assessment of child  
15 safety, risk of subsequent child abuse or neglect, and family  
16 strengths and needs that is applied to a child abuse or neglect  
17 report that does not allege knowing or intentional child abuse or  
18 neglect. Assessment does not include a determination as to whether  
19 the child abuse or neglect occurred but does determine the need for  
20 services to address the safety of family members and the risk of  
21 subsequent abuse or neglect;

22                   (a) — (c) Child abuse or neglect means knowingly,  
23 intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to  
24 be:

25                   (i) Placed in a situation that endangers his or her life

1       or physical or mental health;

2                 (ii) Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;

3                 (iii) Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or

4       care;

5                 (iv) Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor

6       child is six years of age or younger;

7                 (v) Sexually abused; or

8                 (vi) Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or

9       forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution,

10      debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography,

11      films, or depictions;

12                 (b)—(d) Department means the Department of Health and

13      Human Services;

14                 (e) Investigation means fact gathering related to the

15      current safety of a child and the risk of subsequent child abuse or

16      neglect that determines whether child abuse or neglect has occurred

17      and whether child protective services are needed;

18                 (e)—(f) Law enforcement agency means the police

19      department or town marshal in incorporated municipalities, the office

20      of the sheriff in unincorporated areas, and the Nebraska State

21      Patrol;

22                 (d)—(g) Out-of-home child abuse or neglect means child

23      abuse or neglect occurring in day care homes, foster homes, day care

24      centers, group homes, and other child care facilities or

25      institutions; and

1                   (e) (h) Subject of the report of child abuse or neglect  
2 means the person or persons identified in the report as responsible  
3 for the child abuse or neglect.

4                   Sec. 2. (1) The Legislature declares that the public  
5 policy of the State of Nebraska is to protect children whose health  
6 or welfare may be jeopardized by abuse or neglect. The Legislature  
7 recognizes that most families want to keep their children safe, but  
8 circumstances or conditions sometimes interfere with their ability to  
9 do so. Families and children are best served by interventions that  
10 engage their protective capacities and address immediate safety  
11 concerns and ongoing risks of child abuse or neglect. In furtherance  
12 of this public policy and the family policy and principles set forth  
13 in sections 43-532 and 43-533, it is the intent of the Legislature to  
14 strengthen the family and make the home, school, and community safe  
15 for children by promoting responsible child care in all settings and  
16 to provide, when necessary, a safe temporary or permanent home  
17 environment for abused or neglected children.

18                   (2) In addition, it is the policy of this state to  
19 require the reporting of child abuse or neglect in home, school, and  
20 community settings; to provide for alternative response, when  
21 appropriate, as the preferred response to reports not alleging  
22 substantial child abuse or neglect; to require an investigation when  
23 the report alleges substantial child abuse or neglect; and to provide  
24 protective services, family support, and family preservation services  
25 in appropriate cases.

1               Sec. 3. (1) The department, in consultation with the  
2 Nebraska Children's Commission, shall develop an alternative response  
3 implementation plan in accordance with sections 2 to 7 of this act.  
4 When the alternative response implementation plan has been developed,  
5 the department may begin using alternative response in up to five  
6 alternative response demonstration project locations that are  
7 designated by the department in consultation with the commission. The  
8 department shall provide a report of an evaluation done pursuant to  
9 subsection (2) of this section to the Legislature and the commission  
10 by December 15, 2014. The department may begin using alternative  
11 response in up to five additional alternative response demonstration  
12 project locations on January 1, 2015. The department shall provide a  
13 report of another evaluation done pursuant to subsection (2) of this  
14 section to the Legislature and the commission by November 15, 2015.  
15 The department may continue using alternative response until May 15,  
16 2016. Continued use of alternative response thereafter requires  
17 approval of the Legislature.

18               (2) The department shall contract with an independent  
19 entity to evaluate the alternative response demonstration projects.  
20 The evaluation shall include, but is not limited to, data on impact  
21 on child safety and the recurrence of child abuse or neglect, family  
22 access to services, and entry of children into out-of-home care and  
23 the costs of the implementation and use of alternative response.

24               (3) The Nebraska Children's Commission shall advise the  
25 department on:

1                   (a) The development of the alternative response  
2 implementation plan for alternative response demonstration projects;  
3                   (b) Oversight and monitoring of the alternative response  
4 implementation plan;  
5                   (c) Consulting with child welfare stakeholders, service  
6 providers, and other community partners for feedback and  
7 recommendations on the alternative response implementation plan;  
8                   (d) Defining the scope of the independent evaluation of  
9 the implementation of alternative response; and  
10                  (e) Defining the scope of the ongoing evaluation of the  
11 alternative response.

12                  (4) The department shall adopt and promulgate rules and  
13 regulations governing the use of alternative response, the transfer  
14 of cases between investigation and alternative response, the rights  
15 of families offered alternative response, the provision of voluntary  
16 services, and the collection, sharing, and reporting of data prior to  
17 the use of alternative response.

18                  Sec. 4. (1) This section applies to alternative response  
19 demonstration projects designated under section 3 of this act.

20                  (2) When any physician, any medical institution, any  
21 nurse, any school employee, any social worker, the Inspector General  
22 appointed under section 43-4317, or any other person has reasonable  
23 cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or  
24 neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or  
25 circumstances which reasonably would result in child abuse or

1     neglect, he or she shall report or cause a report of such incident to  
2     be made to the department on the toll-free telephone number described  
3     in subsection (3) of this section or the department may request such  
4     report in writing. The reporter shall provide his or her name and  
5     address, and to the extent available the address and age of the  
6     abused or neglected child, the address of the person or persons  
7     having custody of the abused or neglected child, the nature and  
8     extent of the child abuse or neglect or the conditions and  
9     circumstances which would reasonably result in such child abuse or  
10    neglect, any evidence of previous child abuse or neglect including  
11    the nature and extent, and any other information which in the opinion  
12    of the reporter may be helpful in establishing the cause of such  
13    child abuse or neglect and the identity of the perpetrator or  
14    perpetrators. If a law enforcement agency rather than the department  
15    receives an initial report of child abuse or neglect and immediate  
16    action is required under the circumstances, the law enforcement  
17    agency shall immediately proceed with an investigation and notify the  
18    department as soon as possible.

19                 (3) The department shall maintain a statewide toll-free  
20    telephone number to be used by any person any hour of the day or  
21    night, any day of the week, to make reports of child abuse or  
22    neglect.

23                 Sec. 5. (1) This section applies to alternative response  
24    demonstration projects designated under section 3 of this act.

25                 (2) Upon the receipt of a report of child abuse and

1     neglect by telephone or in writing required by section 4 of this act,  
2     the department shall immediately determine the response to the report  
3     of child abuse or neglect. The department shall not use alternative  
4     response if: The report includes allegations of physical abuse that  
5     has resulted in serious bodily injury, as defined in section 28-109,  
6     to a child; bodily injury, as defined in section 28-109, to a child  
7     sustained during the commission of a domestic assault under section  
8     28-323; sexual assault of a child under section 28-319.01 or  
9     28-320.01; neglect resulting in bodily injury, as defined in section  
10    28-109, to a child; a child death in which the alleged perpetrator  
11    resides with other children in the home; the manufacture, as defined  
12    in section 28-401, of methamphetamine; a positive methamphetamine  
13    screen or test during the term of a pregnancy; child contact with  
14    methamphetamine including, but not limited to, a positive meconium or  
15    hair follicle screen test; a report of an adult or caretaker, as  
16    defined in section 71-6721, residing in the home with a child where  
17    such adult or caretaker has previously had his or her parental rights  
18    terminated; abuse or neglect in a household where an active  
19    investigation by the Division of Children and Family Services of the  
20    Department of Health and Human Services is occurring of one or more  
21    individuals residing in the home; abuse or neglect in a household  
22    where an individual or family is currently receiving services through  
23    the Protection and Safety section of the Division of Children and  
24    Family Services; or a child has been recovered from a kidnapping.  
25    Alternative response shall not be used for out-of-home child abuse

1     and neglect reports.

2                 (3) If the response is an investigation, the department  
3     shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency to immediately  
4     investigate the report, take immediate steps to protect the child,  
5     and institute legal proceedings, if appropriate. In situations of  
6     alleged out-of-home child abuse or neglect if the person or persons  
7     to be notified have not already been notified and the person to be  
8     notified is not the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect,  
9     the law enforcement agency shall immediately notify the person or  
10    persons having custody of each child who has allegedly been abused or  
11    neglected that such report of alleged child abuse or neglect has been  
12    made and shall provide such person or persons with information of the  
13    nature of the alleged child abuse or neglect. The law enforcement  
14    agency may request assistance from the department during  
15    investigation for purposes of assessing risk of harm to the child  
16    involved. The department shall also provide services as are necessary  
17    and appropriate under the circumstances to protect and assist the  
18    child and to preserve the family. The law enforcement agency shall,  
19    by the next working day after the investigative response, notify the  
20    department as to whether or not an investigation is being undertaken  
21    by the law enforcement agency. The law enforcement agency shall  
22    provide the department with a copy of each investigation done under  
23    this section.

24                 (4) In the case of alternative response, the department  
25    may complete the assessment described in subdivision (2)(b) of

1     section 28-710. The department shall transfer a subject of a report  
2     being given alternative response to a law enforcement agency for  
3     investigation if the department determines that a child's safety is  
4     compromised. Participation in services offered to a subject of a  
5     report being given alternative response is voluntary on the part of  
6     the subject. A subject of a report being given alternative response  
7     shall not be transferred to a law enforcement agency for  
8     investigation based upon his or her failure to enroll or participate  
9     in such services. When the response to the report of child abuse or  
10    neglect is alternative response, there shall be no formal  
11    determination of the case and the subject of the report shall not be  
12    entered into the central register of child protection cases  
13    maintained pursuant to section 28-718.

14                 (5) The department shall, by the next working day after  
15    receipt of a report of child abuse and neglect or notification by a  
16    law enforcement agency as provided in section 4 of this act, enter in  
17    the tracking system of child protection cases maintained pursuant to  
18    section 28-715 all reports of child abuse or neglect received under  
19    this section that are opened for investigation or alternative  
20    response and any action taken.

21                 (6) The department shall, upon request, make available to  
22    the appropriate investigating law enforcement agency and the county  
23    attorney a copy of all reports relative to a case of suspected child  
24    abuse or neglect subject to investigation. Aggregate, non-identifying  
25    reports of child abuse or neglect being given alternative response

1       shall be made available quarterly to requesting agencies outside the  
2       department. Such alternative response case data shall include, but  
3       not be limited to, the nature of the initial child abuse or neglect  
4       report, the nature of services offered, the location of the cases,  
5       the number of cases per month, and the number of alternative response  
6       cases that were transferred for investigation. Agencies other than  
7       the department and the Office of the Inspector General of Nebraska  
8       Child Welfare shall not be provided specific, identifying reports of  
9       child abuse or neglect being given alternative response. The office  
10      shall have access to all reports relative to cases of suspected child  
11      abuse or neglect subject to investigation and those subject to  
12      alternative response. The department and the office shall develop  
13      procedures allowing for the Inspector General's review of cases  
14      subject to alternative response. The Inspector General shall include  
15      in the report pursuant to section 43-4331 a summary of all cases  
16      reviewed pursuant to this subsection.

17                  Sec. 6. (1) This section applies to alternative response  
18       demonstration projects designated under section 3 of this act.

19                  (2) Upon completion of investigation done pursuant to  
20       section 5 of this act:

21                  (a) In situations of alleged out-of-home child abuse or  
22       neglect, the person or persons having custody of the allegedly abused  
23       or neglected child or children shall be given written notice of the  
24       results of the investigation and any other information the law  
25       enforcement agency or department deems necessary. Such notice and

1     information shall be sent by first-class mail; and  
2                 (b) The subject of the report of child abuse or neglect  
3     shall be given written notice of the determination of the case and  
4     whether the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect will be  
5     entered into the central register of child protection cases  
6     maintained pursuant to section 28-718 under the criteria provided in  
7     section 28-720.

8                 (3) If the subject of the report will be entered into the  
9     central register, the notice to the subject shall be sent by  
10    certified mail with return receipt requested or first-class mail to  
11    the last-known address of the subject of the report of child abuse or  
12    neglect and shall include:

13                 (a) The nature of the report;  
14                 (b) The classification of the report under section  
15    28-720; and

16                 (c) Notification of the right of the subject of the  
17    report of child abuse or neglect to request the department to amend  
18    or expunge identifying information from the report or to remove the  
19    substantiated report from the central register in accordance with  
20    section 28-723.

21                 (4) If the subject of the report will not be entered into  
22    the central register, the notice to the subject shall be sent by  
23    first-class mail and shall include:

24                 (a) The nature of the report; and  
25                 (b) The classification of the report under section

1      28-720.

2                Sec. 7. Section 28-711, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
3      Supplement, 2012, is amended to read:

4                28-711 If section 4 of this act does not apply:

5                (1) When any physician, any medical institution, any  
6      nurse, any school employee, any social worker, the Inspector General  
7      appointed under section 43-4317, or any other person has reasonable  
8      cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or  
9      neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or  
10     circumstances which reasonably would result in child abuse or  
11     neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report of  
12     child abuse or neglect to be made to the proper law enforcement  
13     agency or to the department on the toll-free number established by  
14     subsection subdivision (2) of this section. Such report may be made  
15     orally by telephone with the caller giving his or her name and  
16     address, shall be followed by a written report, and to the extent  
17     available shall contain the address and age of the abused or  
18     neglected child, the address of the person or persons having custody  
19     of the abused or neglected child, the nature and extent of the child  
20     abuse or neglect or the conditions and circumstances which would  
21     reasonably result in such child abuse or neglect, any evidence of  
22     previous child abuse or neglect including the nature and extent, and  
23     any other information which in the opinion of the person may be  
24     helpful in establishing the cause of such child abuse or neglect and  
25     the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators. Law enforcement

1       agencies receiving any reports of child abuse or neglect under this  
2       subsection shall notify the department pursuant to section 28-718 on  
3       the next working day by telephone or mail; and .

4                     (2) The department shall establish a statewide toll-free  
5       number to be used by any person any hour of the day or night, any day  
6       of the week, to make reports of child abuse or neglect. Reports of  
7       child abuse or neglect not previously made to or by a law enforcement  
8       agency shall be made immediately to such agency by the department.

9                     Sec. 8. Section 28-713, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
10      Nebraska, is amended to read:

11                     28-713 Upon If section 5 of this act does not apply, upon  
12      the receipt of a call reporting child abuse and neglect as required  
13      by section 28-711:

14                     (1) It is the duty of the law enforcement agency to  
15       investigate the report, to take immediate steps to protect the child,  
16       and to institute legal proceedings if appropriate. In situations of  
17       alleged out-of-home child abuse or neglect if the person or persons  
18       to be notified have not already been notified and the person to be  
19       notified is not the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect,  
20       the law enforcement agency shall immediately notify the person or  
21       persons having custody of each child who has allegedly been abused or  
22       neglected that such report of alleged child abuse or neglect has been  
23       made and shall provide such person or persons with information of the  
24       nature of the alleged child abuse or neglect. The law enforcement  
25       agency may request assistance from the department during the

1 investigation and shall, by the next working day, notify either the  
2 hotline or the department of receipt of the report, including whether  
3 or not an investigation is being undertaken by the law enforcement  
4 agency. A copy of all reports, whether or not an investigation is  
5 being undertaken, shall be provided to the department;

6 (2) In situations of alleged out-of-home child abuse or  
7 neglect if the person or persons to be notified have not already been  
8 notified and the person to be notified is not the subject of the  
9 report of child abuse or neglect, the department shall immediately  
10 notify the person or persons having custody of each child who has  
11 allegedly been abused or neglected that such report of alleged child  
12 abuse or neglect has been made and shall provide such person or  
13 persons with information of the nature of the alleged child abuse or  
14 neglect and any other information that the department deems  
15 necessary. The department shall investigate for the purpose of  
16 assessing each report of child abuse or neglect to determine the risk  
17 of harm to the child involved. The department shall also provide such  
18 social services as are necessary and appropriate under the  
19 circumstances to protect and assist the child and to preserve the  
20 family;

21 (3) The department may make a request for further  
22 assistance from the appropriate law enforcement agency or take such  
23 legal action as may be appropriate under the circumstances;

24 (4) The department shall, by the next working day after  
25 receiving a report of child abuse or neglect under subdivision (1) of

1     this section, make a written report or a summary on forms provided by  
2     the department to the proper law enforcement agency in the county and  
3     enter in the tracking system of child protection cases maintained  
4     pursuant to section 28-715 all reports of child abuse or neglect  
5     opened for investigation and any action taken; and

6                 (5) The department shall, upon request, make available to  
7     the appropriate investigating law enforcement agency and the county  
8     attorney a copy of all reports relative to a case of suspected child  
9     abuse or neglect.

10                Sec. 9. Section 28-713.01, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
11     Supplement, 2012, is amended to read:

12                28-713.01 If section 6 of this act does not apply:

13                (1) Upon completion of the investigation pursuant to  
14     section 28-713:

15                (a) In situations of alleged out-of-home child abuse or  
16     neglect, the person or persons having custody of the allegedly abused  
17     or neglected child or children shall be given written notice of the  
18     results of the investigation and any other information the law  
19     enforcement agency or department deems necessary. Such notice and  
20     information shall be sent by first-class mail; and

21                (b) The subject of the report of child abuse or neglect  
22     shall be given written notice of the determination of the case and  
23     whether the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect will be  
24     entered into the central register of child protection cases  
25     maintained pursuant to section 28-718 under the criteria provided in

1       section 28-720; -

2                     (2) If the subject of the report will be entered into the  
3       central register, the notice to the subject shall be sent by  
4       certified mail with return receipt requested or first-class mail to  
5       the last-known address of the subject of the report of child abuse or  
6       neglect and shall include:

7                     (a) The nature of the report;

8                     (b) The classification of the report under section  
9       28-720; and

10                   (c) Notification of the right of the subject of the  
11      report of child abuse or neglect to request the department to amend  
12      or expunge identifying information from the report or to remove the  
13      substantiated report from the central register in accordance with  
14      section 28-723; and -

15                   (3) If the subject of the report will not be entered into  
16      the central register, the notice to the subject shall be sent by  
17      first-class mail and shall include:

18                     (a) The nature of the report; and

19                     (b) The classification of the report under section  
20      28-720.

21                   Sec. 10. Section 28-714, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
22      Nebraska, is amended to read:

23                   28-714 The privileged communication between patient and  
24      physician, between client and professional counselor, and between  
25      husband and wife shall not be a ground for excluding evidence in any

1       judicial proceeding resulting from a report of child abuse or neglect  
2       required by section 28-711 or section 4 of this act.

3                   Sec. 11. Section 28-715, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
4       Nebraska, is amended to read:

5                   28-715 The department shall retain all information from  
6       all reports of suspected child abuse or neglect required by section  
7       28-711 or section 4 of this act and all records generated as a result  
8       of such reports in a tracking system of child protection cases. The  
9       tracking system shall be used for statistical purposes as well as a  
10      reference for future investigations if subsequent reports of child  
11      abuse or neglect are made involving the same victim or subject of a  
12      report of child abuse or neglect.

13                  Sec. 12. Section 28-716, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
14       Nebraska, is amended to read:

15                  28-716 Any person participating in an investigation or  
16       the making of a report of child abuse or neglect required by section  
17       28-711 or section 4 of this act pursuant to or participating in a  
18       judicial proceeding resulting therefrom shall be immune from any  
19       liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or  
20       imposed, except for maliciously false statements.

21                  Sec. 13. Section 28-717, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
22       Nebraska, is amended to read:

23                  28-717 Any person who willfully fails to make any report  
24       of child abuse or neglect required by section 28-711 or section 4 of  
25       this act shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor.

1                   Sec. 14. Section 28-719, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3                   28-719 Upon complying with identification requirements  
4 established by regulation of the department, or when ordered by a  
5 court of competent jurisdiction, any person legally authorized by  
6 section 28-722, 28-726, or 28-727 to have access to records relating  
7 to child abuse and neglect may request and shall be immediately  
8 provided the information requested in accordance with the requirement  
9 of the Child Protection and Family Safety Act. Such information shall  
10 not include the name and address of the person making the report of  
11 child abuse or neglect. The names and other identifying data and the  
12 dates and the circumstances of any persons requesting or receiving  
13 information from the central register of child protection cases  
14 maintained pursuant to section 28-718 shall be entered in such  
15 register record.

16                  Sec. 15. Section 28-720, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
17 Supplement, 2012, is amended to read:

18                  28-720 All cases entered into the central register of  
19 child protection cases maintained pursuant to section 28-718 shall be  
20 classified as one of the following:

21                  (1) Court substantiated, if a court of competent  
22 jurisdiction has entered a judgment of guilty against the subject of  
23 the report of child abuse or neglect upon a criminal complaint,  
24 indictment, or information or there has been an adjudication of  
25 jurisdiction of a juvenile court over the child under subdivision (3)

1 (a) of section 43-247 which relates or pertains to the report of  
2 child abuse or neglect;

13 Sec. 16. Section 28-723, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
14 Nebraska, is amended to read:

1 with the Child Protection and Family Safety Act. Such fair hearing  
2 shall be held within a reasonable time after the subject's request  
3 and at a reasonable place and hour. In such hearings, the burden of  
4 proving the accuracy and consistency of the record shall be on the  
5 department. A juvenile court finding of child abuse or child neglect  
6 shall be presumptive evidence that the report was not unfounded. The  
7 hearing shall be conducted by the head-chief executive officer of the  
8 department or his or her designated agent, who is hereby authorized  
9 and empowered to order the amendment, expunction, or removal of the  
10 record to make it accurate or consistent with the requirements of the  
11 act. The decision shall be made in writing, at the close of the  
12 hearing, or within thirty days thereof, and shall state the reasons  
13 upon which it is based. Decisions of the department may be appealed  
14 under the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act.

15 Sec. 17. Section 28-725, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
16 Nebraska, is amended to read:

17 28-725 All information of the department concerning  
18 reports of child abuse or neglect of noninstitutional children,  
19 including information in the tracking system of child protection  
20 cases maintained pursuant to section 28-715 or records in the central  
21 register of child protection cases maintained pursuant to section  
22 28-718, and all information of the department generated as a result  
23 of such reports or records, shall be confidential and shall not be  
24 disclosed except as specifically authorized by the Child Protection  
25 and Family Safety Act and section 81-3126 or other applicable law.

1     The subject of the report of child abuse or neglect may authorize any  
2     individual or organization to receive the following information from  
3     the central register of child protection cases maintained pursuant to  
4     section 28-718 which relates or pertains to him or her: (1) The date  
5     of the alleged child abuse or neglect; and (2) the classification of  
6     the case pursuant to section 28-720. Permitting, assisting, or  
7     encouraging the unauthorized release of any information contained in  
8     such reports or records shall be a Class V misdemeanor.

9                 Sec. 18. Section 28-726, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
10          Supplement, 2012, is amended to read:

11                 28-726 Except as provided in this section and sections  
12          28-722 and 81-3126, no person, official, or agency shall have access  
13          to information in the tracking system of child protection cases  
14          maintained pursuant to section 28-715 or in records in the central  
15          register of child protection cases maintained pursuant to section  
16          28-718 unless in furtherance of purposes directly connected with the  
17          administration of the Child Protection and Family Safety Act. Such  
18          persons, officials, and agencies having access to such information  
19          shall include, but not be limited to:

20                     (1) A law enforcement agency investigating a report of  
21          known or suspected child abuse or neglect;  
22                     (2) A county attorney in preparation of a child abuse or  
23          neglect petition or termination of parental rights petition;  
24                     (3) A physician who has before him or her a child whom he  
25          or she reasonably suspects may be abused or neglected;

(4) An agency having the legal responsibility or authorization to care for, treat, or supervise an abused or neglected child or a parent, a guardian, or other person responsible for the abused or neglected child's welfare who is the subject of the report of child abuse or neglect;

(5) Any person engaged in bona fide research or auditing.

7 No information identifying the subjects of the report of child abuse  
8 or neglect shall be made available to the researcher or auditor;

25 (9) For purposes of licensing providers of child care

1 programs, the Department of Health and Human Services.

2 Sec. 19. Section 28-727, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
3 Nebraska, is amended to read:

4 28-727 Upon request, a physician or the person in charge  
5 of an institution, school, facility, or agency making a legally  
6 mandated report of child abuse or neglect pursuant to section 28-711  
7 or section 4 of this act shall receive a summary of the findings of  
8 and actions taken by the department in response to his or her report.  
9 The amount of detail such summary contains shall depend on the source  
10 of the report of child abuse or neglect and shall be established by  
11 regulations of the department.

12 Sec. 20. Section 28-728, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
13 Supplement, 2012, is amended to read:

14 28-728 (1) The Legislature finds that child abuse and  
15 neglect are community problems requiring a coordinated response by  
16 law enforcement, child advocacy centers, prosecutors, the Department  
17 of Health and Human Services, and other agencies or entities designed  
18 to protect children. It is the intent of the Legislature to create a  
19 child abuse and neglect investigation team in each county or  
20 contiguous group of counties and to create a child abuse and neglect  
21 treatment team in each county or contiguous group of counties.

22 (2) Each county or contiguous group of counties will be  
23 assigned by the Department of Health and Human Services to a child  
24 advocacy center. The purpose of a child advocacy center is to provide  
25 a child-focused location for conducting forensic interviews and

1     medical evaluations for alleged child victims of abuse and neglect  
2     and for coordinating a multidisciplinary team response that supports  
3     the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of children who are  
4     alleged victims of abuse or neglect. Each child advocacy center shall  
5     meet accreditation criteria set forth by the National Children's  
6     Alliance. Nothing in this section shall prevent a child from  
7     receiving treatment or other services at a child advocacy center  
8     which has received or is in the process of receiving accreditation.

9                 (3) Each county attorney or the county attorney  
10    representing a contiguous group of counties is responsible for  
11    convening the child abuse and neglect investigation team and ensuring  
12    that protocols are established and implemented. A representative of  
13    the child advocacy center assigned to the team shall assist the  
14    county attorney in facilitating case review, developing and updating  
15    protocols, and arranging training opportunities for the team. Each  
16    team must have protocols which, at a minimum, shall include  
17    procedures for:

18                     (a) Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect as  
19    outlined in section 28-711 and section 4 of this act to include  
20    training to professionals on identification and reporting of abuse;

21                     (b) Assigning roles and responsibilities between law  
22    enforcement and the Department of Health and Human Services for the  
23    initial response;

24                     (c) Outlining how reports will be shared between law  
25    enforcement and the Department of Health and Human Services under

1 section 28-713 and section 5 of this act;

2 (d) Coordinating the investigative response including,  
3 but not limited to:

4 (i) Defining cases that require a priority response;

5 (ii) Contacting the reporting party;

12 (iv) Assessing the need for and arranging, when  
13 indicated, a medical evaluation of the alleged child victim;

14 (v) Assessing the need for and arranging, when indicated,  
15 appropriate mental health services for the alleged child victim or  
16 nonoffender caregiver;

20 (vii) Collecting, processing, and preserving physical  
21 evidence including photographing the crime scene as well as any  
22 physical injuries as a result of the alleged child abuse and neglect;

23 and

(viii) Interviewing the alleged perpetrator;

(e) Reducing the risk of harm to alleged child abuse and

1 neglect victims;

2                         (f) Ensuring that the child is in safe surroundings,  
3 including removing the perpetrator when necessary or arranging for  
4 temporary custody of the child when the child is seriously endangered  
5 in his or her surroundings and immediate removal appears to be  
6 necessary for the child's protection as provided in section 43-248;

7                         (g) Sharing of case information between team members; and

8                         (h) Outlining what cases will be reviewed by the  
9 investigation team including, but not limited to:

10                         (i) Cases of sexual abuse, serious physical abuse and  
11 neglect, drug-endangered children, and serious or ongoing domestic  
12 violence;

13                         (ii) Cases determined by the Department of Health and  
14 Human Services to be high or very high risk for further maltreatment;  
15 and

16                         (iii) Any other case referred by a member of the team  
17 when a system-response issue has been identified.

18                         (4) Each county attorney or the county attorney  
19 representing a contiguous group of counties is responsible for  
20 convening the child abuse and neglect treatment team and ensuring  
21 that protocols are established and implemented. A representative of  
22 the child advocacy center appointed to the team shall assist the  
23 county attorney in facilitating case review, developing and updating  
24 protocols, and arranging training opportunities for the team. Each  
25 team must have protocols which, at a minimum, shall include

1       procedures for:

2                     (a) Case coordination and assistance, including the  
3       location of services available within the area;

4                     (b) Case staffings and the coordination, development,  
5       implementation, and monitoring of treatment or safety plans  
6       particularly in those cases in which ongoing services are provided by  
7       the Department of Health and Human Services or a contracted agency  
8       but the juvenile court is not involved;

9                     (c) Reducing the risk of harm to child abuse and neglect  
10      victims;

11                   (d) Assisting those child abuse and neglect victims who  
12      are abused and neglected by perpetrators who do not reside in their  
13      homes; and

14                   (e) Working with multiproblem status offenders and  
15      delinquent youth.

16                   (5) For purposes of this section, forensic interview  
17      means a video-recorded interview of an alleged child victim conducted  
18      at a child advocacy center by a professional with specialized  
19      training designed to elicit details about alleged incidents of abuse  
20      or neglect, and such interview may result in intervention in criminal  
21      or juvenile court.

22                   Sec. 21. Section 29-4304, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
23      Nebraska, is amended to read:

24                   29-4304 (1) A victim does not waive the protections  
25      afforded by sections 29-4301 to 29-4304 by testifying in court about

1       the offense, except that:

2                 (a) If the victim partially discloses the contents of a  
3       confidential communication in the course of testifying, then either  
4       party may request the court to rule that justice requires the  
5       protections afforded by sections 29-4301 to 29-4304 be waived to the  
6       extent the protections apply to that portion of the confidential  
7       communication; and

8                 (b) Any waiver shall apply only to the extent necessary  
9       to require any witness to respond to counsel's questions concerning a  
10      confidential communication that is relevant to the case.

11               (2) An advocate cannot waive the protections afforded a  
12      victim under sections 29-4301 to 29-4304. However, if a victim brings  
13      suit against an advocate or the agency, business, or organization in  
14      which the advocate was employed or served as a volunteer at the time  
15      of the advocacy relationship, the advocate may testify or produce  
16      records regarding confidential communications with the victim and is  
17      not in violation of sections 29-4301 to 29-4304.

18               (3) Sections 29-4301 to 29-4304 shall not relieve an  
19      advocate of any duty to report suspected adult abuse or neglect as  
20      required by section 28-372 or suspected child abuse or neglect as  
21      required by section 28-711 or section 5 of this act or any other  
22      legal duty to report a criminal or unlawful act.

23               (4) Sections 29-4301 to 29-4304 shall not be construed to  
24      limit any other testimonial privilege available to any person under  
25      the laws of this state.

1                   Sec. 22. Section 43-2932, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3                   43-2932 (1) When the court is required to develop a  
4 parenting plan:

5                   (a) If a preponderance of the evidence demonstrates, the  
6 court shall determine whether a parent who would otherwise be  
7 allocated custody, parenting time, visitation, or other access to the  
8 child under a parenting plan:

9                   (i) Has committed child abuse or neglect;  
10                  (ii) Has committed child abandonment under section  
11 28-705;

12                  (iii) Has committed domestic intimate partner abuse; or  
13                  (iv) Has interfered persistently with the other parent's  
14 access to the child, except in the case of actions taken for the  
15 purpose of protecting the safety of the child or the interfering  
16 parent or another family member, pending adjudication of the facts  
17 underlying that belief; and

18                  (b) If a parent is found to have engaged in any activity  
19 specified by subdivision (1)(a) of this section, limits shall be  
20 imposed that are reasonably calculated to protect the child or  
21 child's parent from harm. The limitations may include, but are not  
22 limited to:

23                  (i) An adjustment of the custody of the child, including  
24 the allocation of sole legal custody or physical custody to one  
25 parent;

(ii) Supervision of the parenting time, visitation, or other access between a parent and the child;

(iii) Exchange of the child between parents through an intermediary or in a protected setting;

5 (iv) Restraints on the parent from communication with or  
6 proximity to the other parent or the child;

11 (vi) Denial of overnight physical custodial parenting  
12 time;

13 (vii) Restrictions on the presence of specific persons  
14 while the parent is with the child;

15 (viii) A requirement that the parent post a bond to  
16 secure return of the child following a period in which the parent is  
17 exercising physical custodial parenting time or to secure other  
18 performance required by the court; or

19 (ix) Any other constraints or conditions deemed necessary  
20 to provide for the safety of the child, a child's parent, or any  
21 person whose safety immediately affects the child's welfare.

(3) If a parent is found to have engaged in any activity specified in subsection (1) of this section, the court shall not order legal or physical custody to be given to that parent without making special written findings that the child and other parent can be adequately protected from harm by such limits as it may impose under such subsection. The parent found to have engaged in the behavior specified in subsection (1) of this section has the burden of proving that legal or physical custody, parenting time, visitation, or other access to that parent will not endanger the child or the other parent.

13 43-4318 (1) The office shall investigate:

(b) Death or serious injury in foster homes, private agencies, child care facilities, and other programs and facilities licensed by or under contract with the department and death or serious injury in any case in which services are provided by the department to a child or his or her parents or any case involving an

1 investigation under the Child Protection and Family Safety Act, which  
2 case has been open for one year or less. The department shall report  
3 all cases of death or serious injury of a child in a foster home,  
4 private agency, child care facility or program, or other program or  
5 facility licensed by the department to the Inspector General as soon  
6 as reasonably possible after the department learns of such death or  
7 serious injury. For purposes of this subdivision, serious injury  
8 means an injury or illness caused by suspected abuse, neglect, or  
9 maltreatment which leaves a child in critical or serious condition.

10 (2) Any investigation conducted by the Inspector General  
11 shall be independent of and separate from an investigation pursuant  
12 to the Child Protection and Family Safety Act. The Inspector General  
13 and his or her staff are subject to the reporting requirements of the  
14 Child Protection and Family Safety Act.

15 (3) Notwithstanding the fact that a criminal  
16 investigation, a criminal prosecution, or both are in progress, all  
17 law enforcement agencies and prosecuting attorneys shall cooperate  
18 with any investigation conducted by the Inspector General and shall,  
19 immediately upon request by the Inspector General, provide the  
20 Inspector General with copies of all law enforcement reports which  
21 are relevant to the Inspector General's investigation. All law  
22 enforcement reports which have been provided to the Inspector General  
23 pursuant to this section are not public records for purposes of  
24 sections 84-712 to 84-712.09 and shall not be subject to discovery by  
25 any other person or entity. Except to the extent that disclosure of

1 information is otherwise provided for in the Office of Inspector  
2 General of Nebraska Child Welfare Act, the Inspector General shall  
3 maintain the confidentiality of all law enforcement reports received  
4 pursuant to its request under this section. Law enforcement agencies  
5 and prosecuting attorneys shall, when requested by the Inspector  
6 General, collaborate with the Inspector General regarding all other  
7 information relevant to the Inspector General's investigation. If the  
8 Inspector General in conjunction with the Public Counsel determines  
9 it appropriate, the Inspector General may, when requested to do so by  
10 a law enforcement agency or prosecuting attorney, suspend an  
11 investigation by the office until a criminal investigation or  
12 prosecution is completed or has proceeded to a point that, in the  
13 judgment of the Inspector General, reinstatement of the Inspector  
14 General's investigation will not impede or infringe upon the criminal  
15 investigation or prosecution. Under no circumstance shall the  
16 Inspector General interview any minor who has already been  
17 interviewed by a law enforcement agency, personnel of the Division of  
18 Children and Family Services of the department, or staff of a child  
19 advocacy center in connection with a relevant ongoing investigation  
20 of a law enforcement agency.

21 Sec. 24. Section 43-4331, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
22 Supplement, 2012, is amended to read:

23 43-4331 On or before September 15 of each year, the  
24 Inspector General shall provide to the Health and Human Services  
25 Committee of the Legislature and the Governor a summary of reports

1 and investigations made under the Office of Inspector General of  
2 Nebraska Child Welfare Act for the preceding year. The summaries  
3 shall detail recommendations and the status of implementation of  
4 recommendations and may also include recommendations to the committee  
5 regarding issues discovered through investigation, audits,  
6 inspections, and reviews by the office that will increase  
7 accountability and legislative oversight of the Nebraska child  
8 welfare system, improve operations of the department and the Nebraska  
9 child welfare system, or deter and identify fraud, abuse, and illegal  
10 acts. Such summary shall include summaries of alternative response  
cases under alternative response demonstration projects implemented  
in accordance with sections 2 to 7 of this act reviewed by the  
Inspector General. The summaries shall not contain any confidential  
14 or identifying information concerning the subjects of the reports and  
15 investigations.

16 Sec. 25. Original sections 28-710, 28-713, 28-714,  
17 28-715, 28-716, 28-717, 28-719, 28-723, 28-725, 28-727, 29-4304, and  
18 43-2932, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 28-711,  
19 28-713.01, 28-720, 28-726, 28-728, 43-4318, and 43-4331, Revised  
20 Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2012, are repealed.