




DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

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Policy Title:	Birth Match Response Policy
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Approved By:	Dr. Alger M. Studstill, Jr.  Executive Director Social Services Administration
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Originating Office:	Office of Child and Family Well Being
Summary of Change:	This policy aligns practices and procedures with current regulatory standards, clarifies the assessment process and timelines, incorporates improvements within the electronic system of record for improved tracking, enhances compliance monitoring, and ensures consistent interpretation across all Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS).
Required Actions:	LDSS are required to respond and provide assessments of birth match reports after receipt from the Social Services Administration (SSA) of the report..
Key Words:	Birth Match Report, Birth Match Assessment Process, Birth notification, Duplicate Match, Family Home
Related Federal Law	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 , 42 U.S.C. § 5106(a)(14)(B) (2025)
Related State Laws	Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. §§ 3-801 and 3-802 (2022) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. Courts and Judicial Proceedings Art. § 3-823(b) (2022) Md. Ann. Code, Fam Law Art. §§ 4-401 and 4-402 (2022 and 2021) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art § 5-302 (2022) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. §§ 5-322 and 5-323 (2014) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. § 5-524 (2024) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. § 5-706 (2024) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art § 5-710(a) (2023) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. § 5-714 (2022)

	Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. § 5-715 (2022) Md. Ann. Code, Fam. Law Art. § 5-1402 (2024) Md. Ann. Code, Health General Art. § 4-222 (2018)
COMAR	COMAR 07.02.01.01 through 07.02.01.10 (2023) COMAR 07.02.07.01 (2022) COMAR 07.02.07.07 (2023) COMAR 07.02.11.04 (2023)
State Plan Implications?	No

Purpose And Summary

This policy outlines the procedures for responding to birth match notifications and conducting birth match assessments. Pursuant to [Family Law Article § 5-715](#), the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Maryland Courts are required to periodically provide the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Vital Statistics Administration, Division of Vital Records (DVR) with the names of individuals whose parental rights have been terminated due to indicated child abuse or neglect, or who have been convicted of murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter of a child within the past ten years.

This policy aims to ensure the Social Services Administration (SSA) and Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) promptly respond to identified birth matches. Their response includes conducting timely assessments and connecting families to services. This action is to prevent child maltreatment and ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the family home. In instances where children cannot remain safely in the family home, this policy outlines the responsibilities of DHS and LDSS in implementing proactive child safety measures to protect children when family preservation services alone are insufficient to ensure their safety.

Related Laws And Regulations

As directed by the General Assembly, the Birth Match process, enacted in 2009 and amended in 2018, was established under the [Family Law Article § 5-715](#) and the [Health-General Article § 4-222](#). The 2018 amendment mandated an additional requirement for Courts to report names of individuals convicted of murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter of a child. Additionally, the amendment expanded MDH's reporting obligations from the original five year time period to include information from the preceding 10 years as codified in the [Health-General Article § 4-222](#).

Under Family Law Articles [§ 5-715](#) and [§ 5-706](#), SSA must verify the parent(s) of any child identified by MDH as meeting birth match criteria and notify the LDSS in the

child's local jurisdiction. In accordance with the [Family Law Article § 4-401](#) and [COMAR 07.02.01.01](#) and [07.02.07.01](#), the objective is to assess the parent(s)' capacity to safely care for the identified birth match child and to provide supportive services that promote family stability and preservation, while preventing the need for protective services involvement or out-of-home placement.

Definitions And Acronyms

Assessment – A systematic approach to assessing the requirement for prevention or protective services, focused on evaluating the safety, risk, and needs of children and families. The assessment includes conducting face-to-face visits within the family home, and utilizing Maryland-approved tools to assess the safety, risk, and needs of children and families.

Birth Match Response – A practice developed to prevent child maltreatment by utilizing existing data systems to link birth certificate, child welfare, and court data. This response initiates a prevention services assessment of children born to parents whose parental rights were terminated in the previous 10 years due to indicated child abuse and/or neglect, or who have been convicted of murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter of a child.

Birth Match Reports – Reports SSA receives from MDH identifying births to parents whose parental rights were terminated within the past 10 years due to indicated child abuse and/or neglect, or who have been convicted of murder, attempted murder, or manslaughter of a child.

Birth Match Notification Form – The form SSA emails to the LDSS detailing the name, date of birth, address, and electronic system of record identification number of the identified birth match parent. This form also includes the name and date of birth of the child identified in the MDH birth match report.

Duplicate Match – The name of a child previously identified by MDH as a birth match. The name has appeared in more than one MDH birth report.

Family Home – The home where the primary caregiver of the identified birth match child resides.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) – Voluntary or contested court-ordered process that terminates parental rights when a parent is unable to ensure a safe environment for their child. This legal process permanently ends the legal parent-child relationship. Once a parent's rights are terminated, they no longer have any legal rights or responsibilities for the child, including custody, visitation, or decision-making.

Procedures And Timeframes

Birth Match Procedures

MDH cross-references the names of TPR'd parents provided by DHS and the courts with parents who have recently had a child. MDH sends SSA a list of TPR'd parents who match with a child. SSA searches the electronic system of record to verify whether the birth match child has been assessed by an LDSS and forwards the birth match information and relevant case history to the LDSS where the family resides. To mitigate harm, the LDSS reviews the case, including the reasons for the TPR, and takes appropriate steps to assess the birth match child, and any other children in the household.

Responsibilities of SSA regarding Birth Match

1. Receive birth match reports from MDH and **within 48 hours** of receipt of MDH birth match reports, SSA will;
 - 1.1. Verify that the parent of the identified child matches the individual described in the MDH birth match report by using the electronic system of record;
 - 1.2. Verify all birth matches to eliminate duplicate matches and any identified newborns who are in out-of-home care or who have been adopted;
 - 1.3. Search the electronic system of record for any parent identified as a match to determine if that individual has or has had an active child welfare case; and
 - 1.4. Complete the birth match notification form and (based on the address provided in the MDH birth match report) forward to the LDSS in that jurisdiction. If the report did not provide an address for the parent, SSA will forward the birth match notification to the LDSS in the jurisdiction where the birth occurred.
 - 1.5. **Within 25 calendar days** following the birth match notification, SSA will send a reminder email to the LDSS. This email will remind the LDSS the birth match summary is due within five calendar days, which is 30 calendar days after the initial birth match notification; and
 - 1.6. **Within two business days of receiving the LDSS birth match summary**, SSA will review and verify whether the LDSS has completed the birth match assessment and summary. SSA will then notify the LDSS whether the birth match assessment requirements have been fulfilled.

Responsibilities of LDSS regarding Birth Match

2. **Preserve Confidentiality**
 - 2.1. When following up on a birth match notification, maintain the confidentiality of information in the LDSS or court TPR record; and

- 2.2. In cases where only one parent of the child has a prior TPR (based on indicated child abuse or neglect), the LDSS must obtain written consent using the [DHS/FIA 704 Consent to Release Information \(Rev 07-17\)](#). This consent must be signed in order to share any information about the TRP with the other parent.
- 2.3. If the LDSS cannot attain a signed consent from the parent with the TPR, the LDSS may share information regarding the prior TPR with the other parent, but only if sharing that information would allow that parent to substantially mitigate the risk to the child.

3. Intake Process: As quickly as possible but **no later than 24 hours** after receiving the birth match notification from SSA, the LDSS will complete the following steps:

- 3.1. Complete an intake referral for the birth match notification;
- 3.2. Identify the intake purpose as “child protective services”;
- 3.3. Identify the maltreatment type as Risk of Harm: “birth match”;
- 3.4. For the initial screening recommendation, select: Accept as Non-CPS: Only Risk of Harm type (unless another selection is more appropriate);
- 3.5. Upload the SSA birth match notification and all relevant CPS records to the “Documents” tab in the electronic system of record.;
- 3.6. Forward the intake referral number to SSA;
- 3.7. If necessary, perform a CPS background clearance for the parents (Refer to [SSA 18-06 Child Protective Services Screening and Case Determination](#)); and
- 3.8. If there is an active case, the LDSS worker should ensure the child identified in the birth match notification is added to the active case as a participant.

4. Screening Out Birth Match Notifications

Only screen out birth match notifications if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 4.1. The parent identified was not convicted; or
- 4.2. The identified birth match child was adopted.
Take the following action for any screened-out birth match:
- 4.3. Notify SSA and include the reason for screening out the birth match; and
- 4.4. The screened out reason must be included in the electronic system of record.

5. Conduct the Birth Match Assessment

All birth match assessments must be completed within **30 calendar days** of receiving the birth match notification.

- 5.1. Within **24 hours but no later than five calendar days** of birth match notification:
 - 5.1.1. Conduct a home visit: A completed home visit consists of face-to-face contact with the TPR'd parent identified in the

- birth match notification, the child's identified caregiver, and the child identified in the birth match notification;
- 5.1.2. Complete a [SAFE- C Assessment](#) including the child identified in the birth match notification, the TPR'd parent (if involved), the child's identified caregiver, and any other children residing in the home..
 - 5.1.3. If the family denies entry into the family home in a case where abuse or neglect is not suspected:
 - 5.1.3.1. Document all attempts to engage the family in the electronic system of record; and;
 - 5.1.3.2. To the extent possible, assess the child identified in the birth match notification and any other children in the home.
 - 5.1.4. If the family denies entry into the family home in a case where child abuse or neglect is suspected:
 - 5.1.4.1 If the LDSS worker suspects a child is in imminent danger, the LDSS worker must request police assistance;
 - 5.1.4.2 The LDSS worker must make an abuse/neglect report to the LDSS according to [COMAR 07.02.07.04](#).
 - 5.1.5 If **three face-to-face attempts** to engage the family are unsuccessful, the LDSS worker must consult with their supervisor to implement additional strategies to obtain updated contact information such as:
 - 5.1.5.1 The LDSS worker will review state-issued food and financial benefits;
 - 5.1.5.2 Contact the hospital listed on the birth match notification;
 - 5.1.5.3 Contact relatives if identified in the electronic system of record;
 - 5.1.5.4 Contact former service providers listed in the family's electronic system of record;
 - 5.1.5.5 Request assistance from after-hours staff to complete an after-hours visit;
 - 5.1.5.6 Send a certified letter to the address listed on the birth match notification detailing the purpose of the birth match assessment and request a home visit with the family; and
 - 5.1.5.7 If any of the aforementioned strategies prove unsuccessful, the LDSS worker may issue an [Intended action letter](#) to close the family preservation case.
 - 5.2. Within **30 calendar days** of receiving all birth match notifications, the LDSS must proceed as described below, regardless of whether the LDSS has consent or can obtain CPS records, other case records, or court orders:
 - 5.2.1. Check "birth match" in the "Person" tab in the electronic system of record for the child identified in the birth match

- notification;
- 5.2.2. Complete a [Risk assessment](#) and a [CANS-F assessment](#) that include the child identified in the birth match notification, the TPR'd parent (if involved), the child's identified caregiver, and any other children residing in the family home;
 - 5.2.2.1. Do not repeat any assessments the LDSS has already completed as long as they include the child identified in the birth match notification and were completed no more than 30 days prior to the birth match notification;
 - 5.2.2.2. All assessments ([SAFE-C](#), [Risk assessment](#) and [CANS-F](#)) must be approved by a supervisor.
 - 5.2.2.3. All contacts with the family (phone, face-to-face, and email) must be documented in the electronic system of record.
 - 5.2.2.4. If the child(ren) in the family home are considered to be safe per the results of the [SAFE-C](#) and [Risk Assessment](#), the LDSS must offer and provide in a timely manner, whatever services the family needs to remain intact and within a safe environment for the children as described in [COMAR 07.02.01.03](#);
 - 5.2.2.5. If the child(ren) are found to be unsafe per the results of the [SAFE-C](#) and [Risk assessment](#), the LDSS must immediately take action to protect the child(ren) pursuant to [Family Law Article § 5-710\(a\)](#) and [COMAR 07.02.07.07](#). To ensure the child(ren)'s safety, the LDSS must take custody of the child(ren) and immediately file a petition with the juvenile court to initiate a shelter care hearing or file for CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) proceeding, or pursue a [Voluntary Placement Agreement](#) as appropriate.
 - 5.2.2.6. Complete all parts of the birth match summary, email it to SSA, and upload it into the "Documents" tab in the electronic system of record.

6. SSA's Responsibilities of Non-Compliance of Birth Match Procedure within the allotted time frames

- 6.1. If by calendar day 30, the LDSS has yet to email the birth match summary, SSA will escalate the matter using the standard operating procedure (SOP) [Local Operations and Support to the LDSS](#).
- 6.2. Consistent with the SOP, SSA will notify the SSA Prevention and Child Safety Director and SSA Deputy Executive Director of Child and Family Well-Being of the non-compliance via email; and
 - 6.2.1. Email the LDSS Director and Assistant Director of Family Services outlining the non-compliance with the birth match policy;
 - 6.2.2. Request the LDSS share the reason and any systemic factors for the noncompliance;

- 6.2.3. Offer the LDSS training and coaching around the birth match process;
- 6.2.4. Request a plan of action from the LDSS to resolve the noncompliance; and
- 6.2.5. SSA will send follow up emails every 48 hours until the LDSS becomes compliant.

7. LDSS Responsibility when notified of non-compliance

- 7.1. Within **two business days** of SSA's non-compliance email, the LDSS must respond to SSA with a plan of action to:
 - 7.1.1. Complete the required birth match assessment; and
 - 7.1.2. Email the birth match summary to SSA.

DOCUMENTATION

SSA and the LDSS must observe all statutes, regulations, and policies regarding timely documentation in the electronic system of record of both contacts and tasks completed. Additionally, SSA will maintain a record of MDH birth matches and notifications to the LDSS.

FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

[Birth Match Summary](#)
[Blank Birth Match Notification](#)
[Birth Match Process Timeline Tip Sheet](#)
[Risk Assessment](#)
[Intended Action Letter](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

[SSA/CW #12-39 Consolidated In-Home Services](#)
[SSA/CW #15-21 Safe-C](#)
[SSA/CW #16-01 CANS-F](#)
[SSA/CW #17-14 Failure to Report Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
[SSA/CW #18-06 Child Protective Services Screening and Case Determination Process](#)
[SSA/CW #21-10 Screening Reports of Child and Vulnerable Adult Abuse/Neglect and Requests for Services](#)
[Initial Risk Policy and Procedures Manual](#)