**DESCRIPTION OF NEWBORN CRISIS ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The Children’s Division has received a Newborn Crisis Assessment regarding your child(ren) pursuant to Sections 191.737 and 191.739, RSMo. or Section 210.156.

Sections 191.737 and 191.739, RSMo., require the Children's Division to respond to a request for a home assessment by a physician or other medical personnel who has expressed reservations about releasing an infant from the hospital who may be sent home to a potentially dangerous situation.

Section 210.156 RSMo. requires the Children's Division to identify infants who are at heightened risk for abuse or neglect because of prior incidents involving either or both of a child's parents. Confidentiality laws generally prevent Children’s Service Workers from discussing one parent's prior history with another parent. The Children’s Division will conduct an assessment to determine if supports are needed to maintain the safety and well-being of your family.

An assessment of your home situation is needed prior to, or at the time of your infant(s) release from the hospital. The Division is also required to respond to calls of a similar concern for children under the age of one year, which would also include an assessment of your home situation.

The purpose of the Newborn Crisis Assessment is to discuss:

* The safety and well-being of your child(ren); including but not limited to: safe sleep environment, readiness to provide and care for your new infant, and any special health care needs your infant may have.
* Your family’s resources: family supports, community supports, and any other resources your family is already involved in.
* Your family’s possible need for services; including but not limited to: referral for Family Centered Services, Home Visiting Program, First Steps, Parents as Teachers, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and WIC.

If the Newborn Crisis Assessment indicates that your family could benefit from services, the Children’s Service Worker will offer to work with you to develop an individualized plan to meet your family’s specific needs. This may be done by discussing with you and your family the reported concerns, any specific concerns to your child(ren)’s safety, and any specific resources you may wish to obtain. By working together, the Children’s Division has the best opportunity to understand what types of assistance or support you may want or need, and which services may be provided by the Children’s Division or other agencies in the community.

The Children’s Division is required, at a minimum, to work with you to establish the safety and well-being of your infant child. There may be situations in which the Children’s Division is unable to ensure the safety of children. If so, it may become necessary for the Children’s Division to request assistance from law enforcement or the juvenile court. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have in this regard with the Children’s Service Worker.

The Children’s Division will make every reasonable attempt to complete the Newborn Crisis Assessment within 45 days. Upon your signed, written request, you are able receive a copy of the Newborn Crisis Assessment after it is concluded.

**Resources:**

Safe Sleep Environment is very important in keeping your baby safe. Sleep-related infant death is the leading cause of infant mortality from one month to one year of age. Sleep related deaths are entirely preventable; true SIDS deaths are not. Recommendations for creating a safe sleep environment include:

* + Placing the baby on his or her back on a firm sleep surface such as a crib or bassinet with a tight-fitting sheet.
  + Avoid use of soft bedding, including crib bumpers, blankets, pillows and soft toys. The crib should be bare.
  + Sharing a bedroom with parents/caretakers, but not the same sleeping surface, preferably until the baby turns 1 but at least for the first six months. Room-sharing decreases the risk of SIDS by as much as 50 percent.
  + Avoid baby’s exposure to smoke, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Please visit *Missouri Safe Sleep Coalition* websiteat[*https://safesleep.mo.gov/*](https://safesleep.mo.gov/) for more information.

To apply for Home Visiting Program or Safe Cribs for Missouri Program please visit [*https://dese.mo.gov/childhood/home-visiting*](https://dese.mo.gov/childhood/home-visiting)

For information on locating and applying for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program please visit [*https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic*](https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic) *.*

For breastfeeding support please visit [*https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-support*](https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-support)

For help finding childcare, supports for your family, tracking your child’s development, and parental educational literature and videos visit *Missouri’s Early Care & Education Connections* website at [*https://earlyconnections.mo.gov*/](https://earlyconnections.mo.gov/)

For substance abuse and mental health resources visit [*https://www.missourimhf.org/resources/substance-use-disorders/*](https://www.missourimhf.org/resources/substance-use-disorders/)