§ 421. Responsibility of the office. The office shall: 1. in conjunction with local departments, both jointly and individually, within the appropriation available, conduct a continuing publicity and education program for local department staff, persons and officials required to report including district attorneys, assistant district attorneys, police officers, peace officers, investigators employed in the office of a district attorney, and any other appropriate persons to encourage the fullest degree of reporting of suspected child abuse or maltreatment. Such program shall be developed and implemented in coordination with those established pursuant to section 31.06 of the mental hygiene law, section twenty-eight hundred five-n of the public health law, section thirty-two hundred nine-a of the education law, sections two hundred fourteen-a and eight hundred forty of the executive law and article eleven of this chapter. The program shall include but not be limited to responsibilities, obligations and powers under this title and chapter as well as the diagnosis of child abuse and maltreatment, the procedures of the child protective service, the family court and other duly authorized agencies and the prevention, treatment and remediation of abuse and maltreatment of children in residential care.

2. (a) provide technical assistance to local social services departments regarding case planning and provision of services and performance of other responsibilities pursuant to this title. Such assistance shall be provided on a regular, ongoing basis and shall also be made available as needed, upon request of any such local department.

(b) issue guidelines to assist local social services departments in evaluating and establishing investigative priorities for reports describing situations or events which may pose a clear and present danger to the life, health or safety of a child and which require immediate, personal contact between the local child protective service and the subject of the report, the subject's family, or any other persons named in the report.

(c) issue guidelines to assist local child protective services in the interpretation and assessment of reports of abuse and maltreatment made to the statewide central register described in section four hundred twenty-two of this article. Such guidelines shall include information,

standards and criteria for the identification of evidence of alleged abuse and maltreatment as required to determine whether a report may be indicated pursuant to this article. Provided further, the office of children and family services shall update such guidelines, standards and criteria issued to the local child protective services to include protocols to reduce implicit bias in the decision-making processes, strategies for identifying adverse childhood experiences as defined in paragraph (c) of subdivision one of section twenty-d of this chapter, guidelines to assist in recognizing signs of abuse or maltreatment while interacting virtually, and guidance on identifying an abused or maltreated child when such child is an individual with an intellectual or developmental disability as defined in section 1.03 of the mental hygiene law. The office may utilize existing programs or materials established pursuant to section twenty-d of this chapter.

3. * promulgate regulations setting forth requirements for the performance by local social services departments of the duties and powers imposed and conferred upon them by the provisions of this title and of article ten of the family court act. Such regulations shall establish uniform requirements for the investigation of reports of child abuse or maltreatment under this title. The department shall also issue guidelines which shall set forth the circumstances or conditions under which:

* NB Effective until December 12, 2026

* promulgate regulations setting forth requirements for the performance by local social services departments of the duties and powers imposed and conferred upon them by the provisions of this title and of article ten of the family court act. Such regulations shall establish uniform requirements for the investigation of reports of child abuse or maltreatment under this title. The office of children and family services shall also issue guidelines which shall set forth the circumstances or conditions under which:

* NB Effective December 12, 2026

(a) personal contact shall be made with the child named in the report and any other children in the same household, including interviewing such child or children absent the subject of the report whenever possible and appropriate;

(b) photographs of visible physical injuries or trauma of children who may be the victims of abuse or maltreatment shall be taken or arranged for;

(c) medical examination of a child who may be a victim of abuse or maltreatment and documentation of findings of such examination, shall be required.

* The department shall promulgate regulations to establish standards for intervention, criteria for case closings, criteria for determining whether or not to initiate a child protective proceeding, and criteria for the formulation of treatment plans and for the delivery of child protective services including specification of the services to be classified as child protective services, which shall also apply to any society for the prevention of cruelty to children which has entered into a currently valid contract with a local department of social services to investigate child abuse or maltreatment reports. The department shall promulgate regulations establishing minimum standards and practices for the delivery of child protective services in connection with monitoring and supervising respondents and their families as ordered by a family court pursuant to section ten hundred thirty-nine and paragraphs (i), (iii), (iv) and (v) of subdivision (a) of section ten hundred fifty-two of the family court act. Such regulations shall also require local child protective services to comply with notification requirements of the family court act in connection with such monitoring and supervisory responsibilities.

* NB Effective until March 12, 2026

* The office of children and family services shall promulgate regulations to establish training requirements for child protective services workers consistent with subdivision five of this section, standards for intervention, criteria for case closings, criteria for determining whether or not to initiate a child protective proceeding, and criteria for the formulation of treatment plans and for the delivery of child protective services including specification of the services to be classified as child protective services, which shall also apply to any society for the prevention of cruelty to children which has entered into a currently valid contract with a local department of social services to investigate child abuse or maltreatment reports. The office of children and family services shall promulgate regulations

establishing minimum standards and practices for the delivery of child protective services in connection with monitoring and supervising respondents and their families as ordered by a family court pursuant to section ten hundred thirty-nine and paragraphs (i), (iii), (iv) and (v) of subdivision (a) of section ten hundred fifty-two of the family court act. Such regulations shall also require local child protective services to comply with notification requirements of the family court act in connection with such monitoring and supervisory responsibilities.

* NB Effective March 12, 2026

4. (a) after consultation with the local child protective services, promulgate regulations relating to staff qualifications for non-supervisory child protective services workers, prescribing any baccalaureate or equivalent college degree and/or relevant human service experience as requirements. Such requirements shall not apply to persons currently employed by such child protective services who were hired before January first, nineteen hundred eighty-six.

(b) after consultation with the local child protective services, promulgate regulations relating to staff qualifications for those assigned to be supervisors of child protective services, prescribing any baccalaureate or equivalent college degree and/or relevant human services experience as requirements. Provided, however, that such regulations shall at a minimum provide that those assigned to be supervisors of child protective services have either a baccalaureate degree or three years of relevant work experience in a human services field. Such requirements shall not apply to persons currently assigned to be a child protective services supervisor who were hired before December first, two thousand six.

5. (a) directly or through the purchase of services, implement, subject to the amounts appropriated therefor, an ongoing, statewide training program for employees of the department and of each local department of social services employed in the provision and supervision of child protective services or in other activities required in accordance with the provisions of this title.

* (b) promulgate regulations setting forth training requirements which shall specify, among other things, that all persons hired by a child

protective service on or after April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six shall have satisfactorily completed a course approved by the department within the first three months of employment, in the fundamentals of child protection, provided, however, that on or after April first, two thousand twenty-five, such course may be satisfactorily completed through distance learning methods which evince that all participants are in attendance for the duration of the course and are able to ask questions of the instructor. Each county shall be authorized to adopt a local law, ordinance or resolution to provide for a local department of social services to fulfill the training requirement established by this paragraph through a distance learning method, excluding the annual in service training requirement. Such course shall include at least basic training in the principles and techniques of investigations, including relationships with other investigative bodies, legal issues in child protection, and methods of remediation, diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Such regulations shall also specify that all persons employed by a child protective service on or after December first, two thousand six shall satisfactorily complete six hours of annual in service training, beginning in their second year of employment. Such annual in service training shall include, but is not limited to, review of the protocols for identification and investigation of child abuse and maltreatment, any developments in legal, treatment and prevention issues in child protection, and review and analysis of field experiences of child protective services workers.

* NB Effective until December 12, 2026

* (b) promulgate regulations setting forth training requirements which shall specify, among other things, that all persons hired by a child protective service on or after April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six shall have satisfactorily completed a course approved by the office of children and family services within the first three months of employment, in the fundamentals of child protection, provided, however, that on or after April first, two thousand twenty-five, such course may be satisfactorily completed through distance learning methods which evince that all participants are in attendance for the duration of the course and are able to ask questions of the instructor. Each county shall be authorized to adopt a local law, ordinance or resolution to provide for a local department of social services to fulfill the

training requirement established by this paragraph through a distance learning method, excluding the annual in service training requirement. Such course shall include at least basic training in the principles and techniques of investigations, including relationships with other investigative bodies, legal issues in child protection, and methods of remediation, diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Such regulations shall also specify that all persons employed by a child protective service on or after December first, two thousand six shall satisfactorily complete six hours of annual in service training, beginning in their second year of employment. Such annual in service training shall include, but is not limited to, review of the protocols for identification and investigation of child abuse and maltreatment, any developments in legal, treatment and prevention issues in child protection, and review and analysis of field experiences of child protective services workers.

* NB Effective December 12, 2026

(c) require all persons assigned to be a supervisor by a child protective service on or after April first, nineteen hundred eighty-six, shall have satisfactorily completed, within the first three months of employment as a supervisor or within three months of the effective date of this paragraph, whichever shall occur first, a course in the fundamentals of child protection developed by the office of children and family services. Such training course shall, among other things, strengthen and expand current training procedures for child protective service supervisors; provide the skills, knowledge and standards to practice effective case planning and case management; provide comprehensive assessment tools needed in critical decision making; require participation in the existing next generation training required by child protective service caseworkers; strengthen recognition and response to safety and risk indicators; improve skills to promote consistent implementation of training and practice; provide the necessary tools and assistance to build the ability to coach and monitor child protective service caseworkers and model effective investigation practice; increase cultural competency and sensitivity; and establish an annual in service training program specifically focused on child protective service supervisors.

(d) withhold reimbursement, otherwise payable to social services districts, for the salaries of employees of child protective services

who do not comply with the background review, educational, experience or training requirements of this title.

* (e) promulgate regulations setting forth training requirements for child protective services workers assigned to a multidisciplinary investigative team established pursuant to subdivision six of section four hundred twenty-three of this title, which shall include appropriate techniques for investigating reports of sexual abuse and requirements for ongoing training.

* NB Effective December 12, 2026

6. promulgate regulations which require social services districts to make local procedural manuals and service directories available to employees of a child protective service, service providers and other professionals involved in the prevention of child abuse and maltreatment.

* 7. take all reasonable and necessary actions to assure that the local departments of social services are kept apprised on a current basis of the laws, regulations and policies of the department concerning child abuse and maltreatment.

* NB Effective until December 12, 2026

* 7. take all reasonable and necessary actions to assure that the local departments of social services are kept apprised on a current basis of the laws, regulations and policies of the office of children and family services concerning child abuse and maltreatment.

* NB Effective December 12, 2026

8. monitor and supervise the performance of the local departments of social services.