

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



September 2026 | OAS-25-06-038

Arkansas Failed to Comply With the Immediate Screening, Risk and Safety Assessment, and Investigation Requirements for Responding to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

Why OIG Did This Audit

- Abuse and neglect against a child by a parent, caregiver, or another person can have a long-term impact on the child's health, opportunity, and well-being. Abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional in nature. Neglect is a failure to meet the child's basic needs, such as housing, food, clothing, education, and access to medical care.
- This audit is part of a series that examines States' compliance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act's requirements for the intake, screening, risk and safety assessment, and investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect. Based on our risk assessment, we selected Arkansas for one of our audits.

What OIG Found

Arkansas failed to meet requirements for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and investigation of child abuse and neglect reports. Arkansas inappropriately screened out reports involving allegations of child rape and of children being watched by cameras in their bedrooms as they undressed. Arkansas also failed to notify law enforcement about determinations of severe maltreatment—which under State law can include sexual abuse or life-threatening harm to a child. In addition, Arkansas could not support that interviews with the alleged victims' custodial and noncustodial parents were completed as required.

Specifically, we found that 10 of the 70 screened out reports in our sample had been inappropriately screened out. In addition, 138 of the 140 accepted reports in our sample did not comply with requirements for immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, or investigation.

What OIG Recommends

We made six recommendations to Arkansas, including that it immediately review the inappropriately screened-out sample reports, update its guidance, strengthen its procedures, implement system enhancements, and reinforce existing requirements. Our full recommendations are in the report.

Arkansas concurred with three of our recommendations and partially concurred with the other three. It detailed steps it has taken and plans to take in response to our recommendations.