

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - MONITORING OF CHILDREN
WHOSE PARENTS HAVE PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR CHILD ABUSE

1813. Dr E. Constable to the Minister representing the Minister for Child Protection

I refer to the front page article and photograph in *the West Australian* newspaper dated 14 February 2007, and ask -

- (1) Does the Department of Community Development monitor the wellbeing of children whose parents have previously been convicted of child abuse charges?
- (2) If yes to (1), for how long is their wellbeing monitored after their parent's conviction on abuse charges?
- (3) If yes to (1), how are they monitored?
- (4) If no to (1), why not?
- (5) Are parents who have multiple convictions for assaulting one of their children prevented from having the siblings of their abused child in their care?
- (6) If no to (5), why not?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

The Office of Child Protection advises the following:

- (1-4) The Department for Community Development assesses whether parents who have previously harmed a child continue to pose a risk to their children. If the outcome of the assessment is that the parent poses a risk to their child(ren), the Department's policy is to establish a safety plan for the child(ren) and closely monitor the situation. The safety plan includes parental responsibility to engage with the Department and non government support services.

The length of time the Department monitors the safety of children is determined on a case by case basis. The child(ren) will be removed if the safety plan is jeopardised.

The child(ren)'s safety is monitored by maintaining regular contact with the child(ren) and the family during home visits and office appointments, separate interviews with the child(ren) and from reports provided by other government and non government organisations working with the family. Regular case discussions involving the family and all relevant agencies occur to monitor and co-ordinate the safety planning for the child(ren).

- (5-6) Any decision to remove a child from his or her parents' care would be made following an investigation of the child's safety and wellbeing. The Department is required by the Children and Community Services Act 2004 to apply for a Protection Order for the child, which is determined by the Children's Court.