

January 28, 1999

Ms. Regina Atwell
Assistant City Attorney
City of Cleburne
P.O. Box 677
Cleburne, Texas 76033-0677

OR99-0267



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF TEXAS

— * —

JOHN CORNYN
Attorney General

— * —

P.O. Box 12548
Austin, Texas
78711-2548

(512) 463-2100
www.oag.state.tx.us

Dear Ms. Atwell:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 123098.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Section 261.201 of the Family Code reads in part as follows:

(a) The following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and

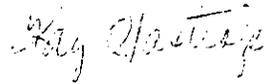
(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

We believe that the requested information consists of reports, records, and working papers used or developed in an investigation made under chapter 261 of the Family Code. Because you have not cited any specific rule that the investigating agency has adopted with regard to the release of this type of information, we assume that no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, the requested information is confidential

pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 (1986) at 2 (construing predecessor statute). Accordingly, you must not release the requested information to the requestor.¹

In light of our conclusion under section 552.101, we need not address the applicability of other exceptions, if any. We are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and may not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,



Kay Hastings
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KHH/nc

Ref: ID# 123098

Enclosures: Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Anthony Stevenson
P.O. Box 182
Alvarado, Texas 76009

¹We note that if the investigation has been referred to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (the "department"), a parent who is a requestor may be entitled to access to the department's records. Section 261.201(f) of the Family Code provides that the department, upon request and subject to its own rules:

shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section if the department has edited the information to protect the confidentiality of the identity of the person who made the report and any other person whose life or safety may be endangered by the disclosure.