

# Act quickly on child-protection reforms

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Nearly two weeks have passed since a Star Tribune [story](#) shocked the state with the tragic details of Eric Dean's short, miserable life. The 4-year-old boy from Starbuck, Minn., was bitten and battered by his father's girlfriend, then died of fatal abuse in February 2013 despite repeated reports filed by his concerned day care providers.

State lawmakers and policymakers now need to do more than lament Eric's sad death. It's time to move quickly to identify and implement the reforms needed to prevent another Minnesota child from ending up in an early grave.

This week, [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) (DHS) officials stepped up and identified a blindingly obvious starting point. DHS officials said they will seek to overturn a law that prevented officials from considering previous abuse reports that had been rejected, in some cases because they lacked supporting details.

Fifteen reports had been filed on Eric at the time of his death. The state law, which codified practices in place for several years, appears to have prevented county officials from identifying a pattern of abuse and acting accordingly.

On Wednesday, DHS Commissioner [Lucinda Jesson](#) sensibly told an editorial writer that the scrutiny needs to go beyond that issue. Criteria for investigating abuse reports needs a hard look, she said. So do the methods that officials use to investigate abuse reports.

The resources that officials possess to safeguard Minnesota children also need to be in the spotlight. Funding for these services has suffered serious declines since 2003. Has fealty to state budget cuts put kids in jeopardy?

DHS shouldn't undertake this complex review on its own. State lawmakers must assess the system and their own role in improving it. A legislative hearing is needed this fall so that fixes are ready to roll when session convenes in 2015. The state is waiting for legislators to step up and lead.

## “Act quickly on child-protection reforms”

*Directions: Fill in the blanks according to information from the article.*

### **CLAIM**

The claim that the writer makes is that Minnesota must identify and put into place changes in the \_\_\_\_\_ system to keep children \_\_\_\_\_.

### **EVIDENCE**

The first piece of evidence the writer uses to support his argument is the story of \_\_\_\_\_ and that his day care providers filed many \_\_\_\_\_ of abuse.

The second piece of evidence given is that there is currently a \_\_\_\_\_ that prevents Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) officials from considering \_\_\_\_\_ abuse reports, and this law prevents identification of a \_\_\_\_\_ of abuse.

Third, the DHS Commissioner suggests that the way that DHS investigates \_\_\_\_\_ needs serious examination.

The final piece of evidence states that \_\_\_\_\_ for child protection services has \_\_\_\_\_ since 2003.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION**

The first suggestion for action the writer highlights is to \_\_\_\_\_ the law that prevents DHS from showing a pattern of abuse in children.

Second, the funding of resources to protect children must \_\_\_\_\_.

Next, Minnesota \_\_\_\_\_ must take a close look at the system and their \_\_\_\_\_ in improving it.

Finally, a \_\_\_\_\_ hearing is needed in the fall of \_\_\_\_\_ so that an improved system will be ready to roll out \_\_\_\_\_ year.



**Anchor 1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant sufficient evidence.

**Skill:** *Understand the prompt*

<u>INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY</u>	<u>DIFFERENTIATION SUGGESTIONS</u>	<u>RESOURCE(S)</u>
<p><b>IDENTIFY KEY WORDS</b> Analyze the words in the prompt; underline the key words that indicate the task/action to be accomplished</p>		
<p><b>NARROW FOCUS OF EXTENDED RESPONSE</b> Identify the specific topic to be addressed by the response</p>		
<p><b>UNPACKING A PROMPT - DO/WHAT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER</b> Break down the prompt using the Do/What graphic organizer by identifying each task needed to completely answer the prompt Do = key action word from the prompt What = key nouns from the prompt to receive the action (e.g. Analyze → speech &amp; editorial; determine → best position, etc)</p>		<p>Steps for Drafting a Constructed Response (GED Testing Service)</p>

**Anchor 1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

**Skill:** *Make a claim*

<u>INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY</u>	<u>DIFFERENTIATION SUGGESTIONS</u>	<u>RESOURCE(S)</u>
<p><b>RESTATE THE QUESTION</b> A great way to help students start their extended responses is by restating the question. When restating the question, students will inevitably start their claim.</p>		
<p><b>START WITH THESIS FRAMES</b> Using a thesis frame, students fill in the blanks with the information for their texts and topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lower level: brainstorm options to fill in the blanks</li> <li>▪ Higher level: students write their own thesis frames/thesis statements</li> </ul>	<p>Steps for Drafting a Constructed Response (GED Testing Service)</p>

### Create a Thesis Statement

A thesis is an answer to a specific question. A thesis statement makes a claim or proposition that reflects a specific point of view. The thesis statement should recognize both sides of a question, yet focus on two to three specific points (discussion points) sometimes called points of analyses. A thesis statement is the roadmap for the written response. The placement of the thesis statement is generally located in the introduction and summarized in the conclusion of a writing sample.

### Sample Thesis Frames

The general argument made by \_\_\_\_\_ in his/her work \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_.

Although \_\_\_\_\_ (believes, demonstrates, argues) that \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ supports/provides the clearest evidence \_\_\_\_\_.

A key factor in both \_\_\_\_\_ can be attributed to \_\_\_\_\_.

When comparing the two positions in this article, \_\_\_\_\_ provides the clearest evidence that \_\_\_\_\_.

Looking at the arguments regarding \_\_\_\_\_, it is clear that \_\_\_\_\_.

In discussion of \_\_\_\_\_, one controversial issue has been \_\_\_\_\_ believes that \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, \_\_\_\_\_ asserts that \_\_\_\_\_ is clearly the best supported argument on the issue of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Check the CD for more constructed response tools to print and use in your classroom:

- Sample Lesson Plan & Instructional Plan
- Tools for Drafting a Constructed Response
- Websites and Resources
- Extended Response Answer Guidelines



Find on the CD

**Anchor 1:** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

### **Skill:** Support claim with evidence

<u>INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY</u>	<u>DIFFERENTIATION SUGGESTIONS</u>	<u>RESOURCE(S)</u>
<p><b>PICTURE ANALYSIS</b> Students look at a picture to determine what happened (e.g. Queenie) Once they've come to a conclusion, they point out what they see &amp; explain how it proves their conclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a conclusion (claim) &amp; ask students to find evidence</li> <li>▪ Provide evidence &amp; ask students to identify the claim</li> <li>▪ Provide claim, evidence &amp; explanation (warrant); ask students to decide whether the evidence proves the claim</li> <li>▪ Provide a claim &amp; evidence; ask students to explain how the evidence proves the claim</li> </ul>	Crime & Puzzlement
<p><b>GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS</b></p>		Up Front "Yes and No"
<p><b>CLOZE WRITING</b> Using sentence &amp; paragraph frames students fill in evidence from the text provided</p>		sentence/paragraph frames
<p><b>Debate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students become familiar with issue and debate another pair who have become familiar with opposing side</li> <li>● Pairs switch sides, become familiar with opposing argument and debate again</li> <li>● Two pairs come together to discuss the strengths and weakness of each side of the argument</li> </ul>		Structured Academic Controversy lesson plans on various debatable topics