

# Child Abuse Reporting

## Emergency Procedures

### Teacher/Supervising Adult and Administration

1. If reasonable cause exists to believe abuse has occurred, report immediately to Department of Child and Family Services or local law enforcement. **WHEN IN DOUBT, REPORT.**
2. Do not inform parent/guardian of the report. It is DCFS's or law enforcement's responsibility to investigate and inform them.

Additional Information:

### Child Protective Services

DCFS safeguards the rights and protects the welfare of children whose parents are unable to do so. As the point of entry for clients, the DCFS intake program operates a 24-hour hotline that receives reports of suspected child abuse and neglect at (insert number). The DCFS staff conducts initial investigations of all reported abuse and neglect to determine whether the allegations are supported.

### How to Recognize Child Abuse and Neglect

"Child abuse and neglect is the intentional, physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of any child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened."

There are many indicators of child abuse. Learn how to recognize the warning signs of:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic Violence

## Child Abuse and Neglect Indicators

**Physical Abuse** is indicated when non-accidental injuries occur, including:

Burns	Bruises	Welts	Severe beatings
Fractures	Unexplained or repeated physical injuries		

**Emotional Abuse** occurs when a parent or caretaker allows or creates a negative emotional atmosphere for the child with these conditions:

Demearing remarks	Perceived or actual threats of harm
Unrealistic parental expectations	Illegal behaviors taught to a child

**Sexual Abuse** happens when a child is exploited for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Indicators include:

Involvement of a child in sexual activity	Knowledge of sexual behavior inappropriate for the child's age
Contact for sexual purposes such as fondling	Involvement or exposure to prostitution and/or pornography

**Neglect** occurs when a parent or caretaker allows the child to experience avoidable suffering or fails to provide basic essentials for physical, social, and emotional development. Indicators of neglect include:

Lack of basic food and clothing	Lack of medical treatment or medication for a serious illness	Inappropriate child hygiene
Lack of appropriate supervision	Lack of education as required by law	Residing in an inappropriate/dangerous

		living environment
--	--	--------------------

**Domestic Violence-Related Child Abuse** occurs when a child:

- Is injured during a physical altercation between adults
- Witnesses domestic violence between adults
- Experiences perceived or actual threats of harm
- Experiences disruption in his/her living situation

### **How to Respond to an Abused Child**

If you suspect a child has been abused or neglected, use the following guidelines to respond.

- Remain calm. A child may retract information or stop talking if he/she senses strong reaction.
- Believe the child. Children rarely make up stories about abuse.
- Listen without passing judgment. Most children know their abusers and often have conflicted feelings.
- Tell the child you are glad that he/she told someone.
- Assure the child that abuse is not his/her fault.
- Do what you can to make certain that the child is safe from further abuse.
- Do not investigate a case yourself. Call the police or the Department of Child and Family Services hotline to make a report.

### **How to Report Child Abuse**

Anyone involved in the care and treatment of patients under the age of 18 are considered "mandatory reporters" and are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Any mandatory reporter who fails to make a report will be fined or imprisoned. Mandatory reporters include the following professionals: Counselor, Day Care Worker, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, School Official, and Teacher.

If child abuse or neglect is suspected, immediately call the DCFS reporting hotline. To make a report, you will need to provide the following information:

- Name, age, sex, and address of the child who is the subject of the report, as well as the names of any siblings, and the parent, guardian, or caregiver
- Nature and extent of the abuse or neglect, as you know it (and any previous abuse or neglect)
- Any additional information that may help establish the cause and identity of persons responsible
- Your name, occupation, contact information, and a statement of any actions taken concerning the child

Call the DCFS hotline immediately—even if all the information is not available to you. If requested, follow up with a written report to the Department of Child and Family Services.

### **Responsibility for Reporting**

The reporting duties are individual and cannot be delegated to another person. When two or more mandated reporters jointly have knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, and when there is agreement among them, the report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement and a single report may be made and signed by the selected member of the reporting team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report has failed to do so shall thereafter make the report.