

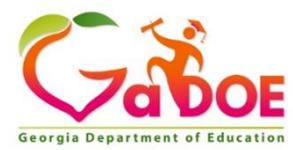


# Protecting Children Amidst Crisis

## A Mandated Reporter's Role

# Webinar

April 14, 2020



# Mandated Reporting During Crisis

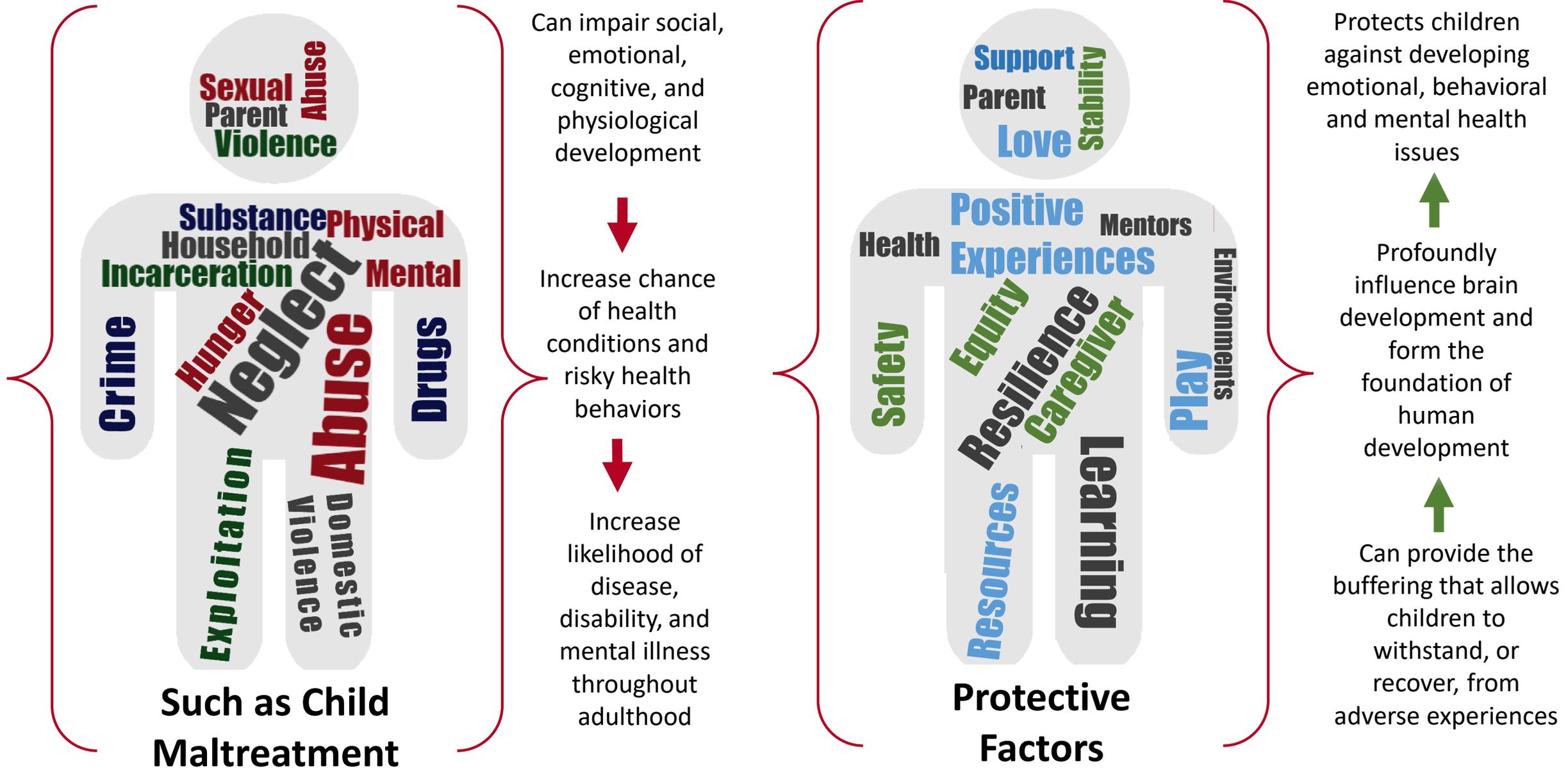
Crisis and economic instability create conditions that fuel child abuse and neglect



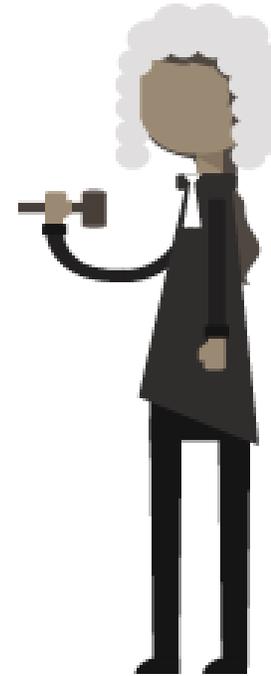
COVID-19



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



# Mandated Reporting



# Who is mandated to report?

Georgia law requires certain individuals to report suspected child abuse:

- Schoolteachers/administrators
- School guidance counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, school psychologists
- Child Service organizational personnel
- Child welfare agency personnel
- Child counseling personnel
- Law enforcement personnel
- Licensed psychologists (interns)
- Physicians licensed to practice medicine; interns/residents
- Registered professional nurses / Licensed practical nurses
- Hospital or medical personnel, Dentists, Podiatrists
- Professional counselors, social workers, or marriage and family therapists
- Staff **and** volunteers at child and family- serving agencies
- Reproductive health care facility or pregnancy resource center personnel and volunteers
- Clergy- however not within the confines of confession

\* Mandated reporters should know and follow the child abuse reporting protocol in their agency

# Your Role

You are legally required to report your **SUSPICION** to the DFCS centralized intake or to your organization's designated mandated reporter.



Familiarize yourself on your **organization's reporting policy.**

**Advocate** for child safety policies in your workplace or community.

## Not Your Role

**Investigating** information an individual or child has told you or injuries of a child

# Mandated Reporter Rights & Requirements

## Rights

- Anonymity or confidentiality
- Limited Liability
- Knowledge of the outcome of a report
  - Only whether the case was substantiated or not

## Requirements

- Report abuse **immediately** but at least within 24 hours
- Designated mandated reporters **MUST** submit all reports made to them
- Turn over illegal images or materials within 72 hours to police 

# What's Reportable to DFCS?

- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
  - Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
- Emotional/Psychological Abuse
- Child Endangerment
  - Prenatal Abuse
  - Commission of a crime in the presence of a child
  - Driving under the influence with a child in the vehicle
  - Intimate Partner Violence in the presence of a child

# Indicators of Abuse

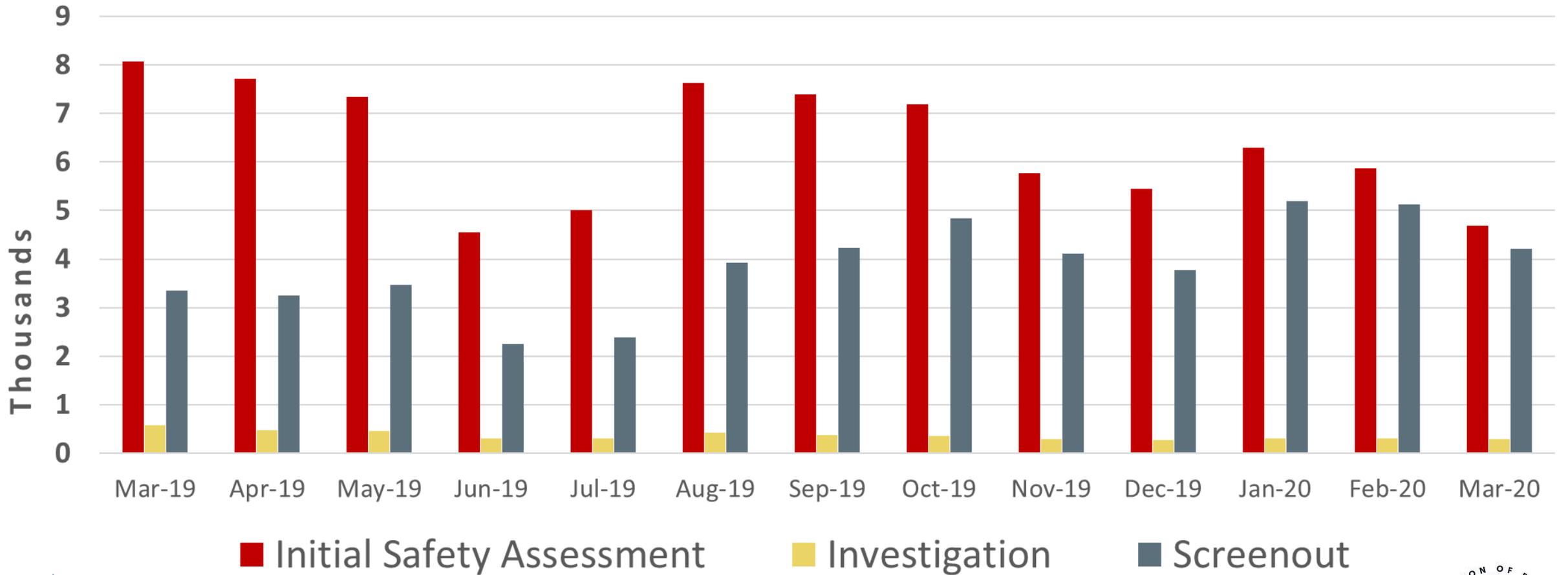
Type of Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained: bruises, welts, burns, fractures/dislocations</li> <li>• Bald patches on the scalp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels deserving of punishment</li> <li>• Wary of adult/physical contact</li> <li>• Frightened of parents/afraid to go home</li> <li>• Self-destructive behaviors</li> <li>• Wears clothing to cover body –inappropriate for weather</li> </ul>
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty walking or sitting</li> <li>• Torn, stained or bloody underclothes</li> <li>• Pain, swelling or itching in the genital area</li> <li>• Bruises, bleeding or laceration in external genitalia area</li> <li>• Presence of STI or other infections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate sex play or advanced sexual knowledge and promiscuity</li> <li>• Hysteria, lack of emotional control</li> <li>• Sudden school difficulties</li> <li>• Withdrawal or depression</li> <li>• Excessive worrying about siblings</li> <li>• Difficult peer relationships</li> <li>• Self-imposed isolation, avoid physical contact</li> </ul>
Emotional Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech or other communicative disorder</li> <li>• Delayed physical development</li> <li>• Exacerbation of existing conditions such as asthma or allergies</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habit disorders (sucking, rocking)</li> <li>• Antisocial or destructive behaviors, including delinquency</li> <li>• Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition to play)</li> <li>• Behavioral extremes (passivity or aggression)</li> </ul>
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent hunger/underweight</li> <li>• Consistent lack of supervision</li> <li>• Unattended physical/medical needs</li> <li>• Failure to thrive/poor growth</li> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Inappropriate dress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-destructive behaviors</li> <li>• Begging, stealing food</li> <li>• Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departures)</li> <li>• Constant fatigue, listlessness</li> <li>• Assuming adult responsibilities</li> <li>• Says no caretaker at home</li> <li>• Frequently absent / tardy</li> </ul>



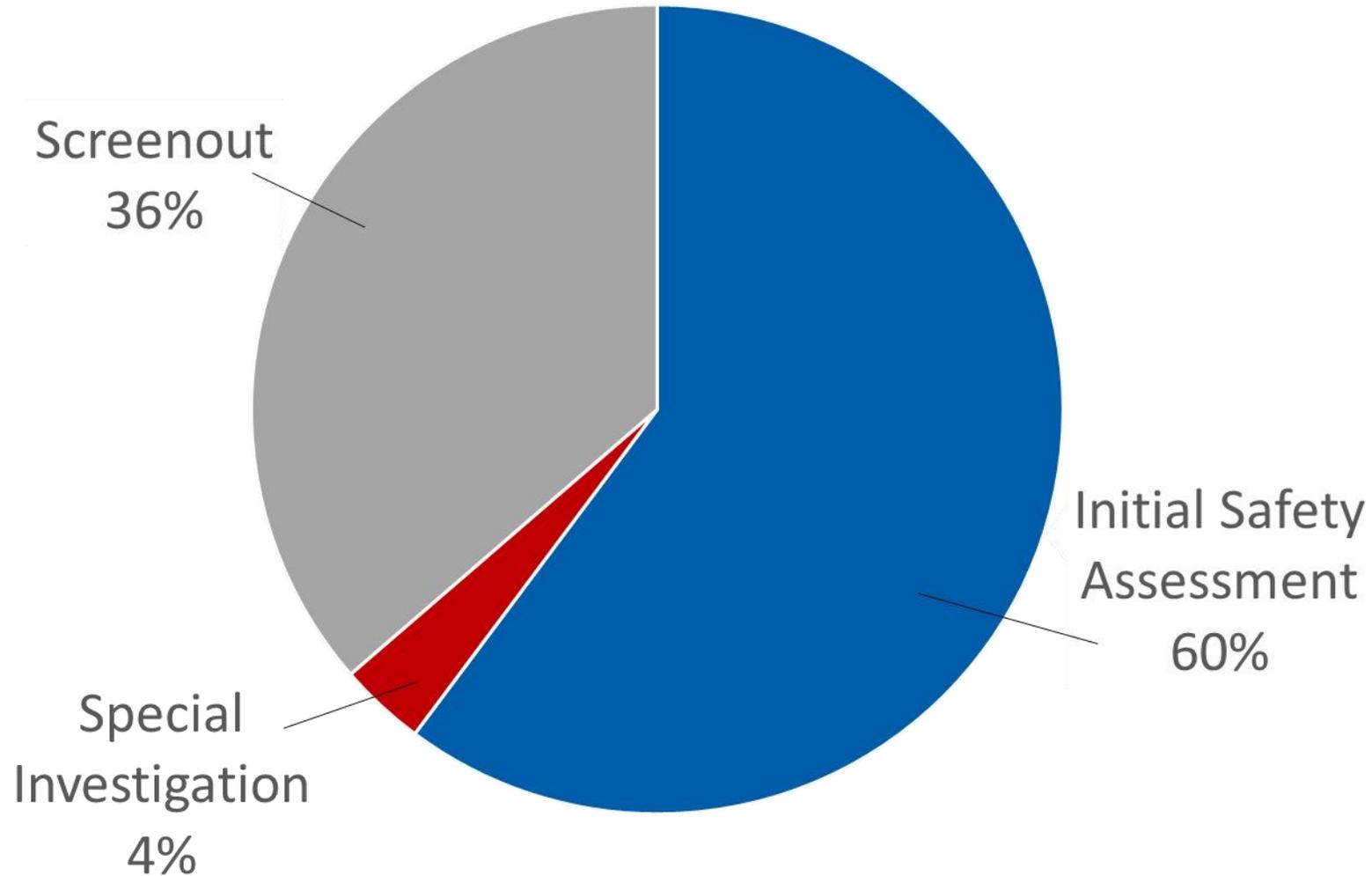
# Updates and Response

GA Division of Family  
& Children Services

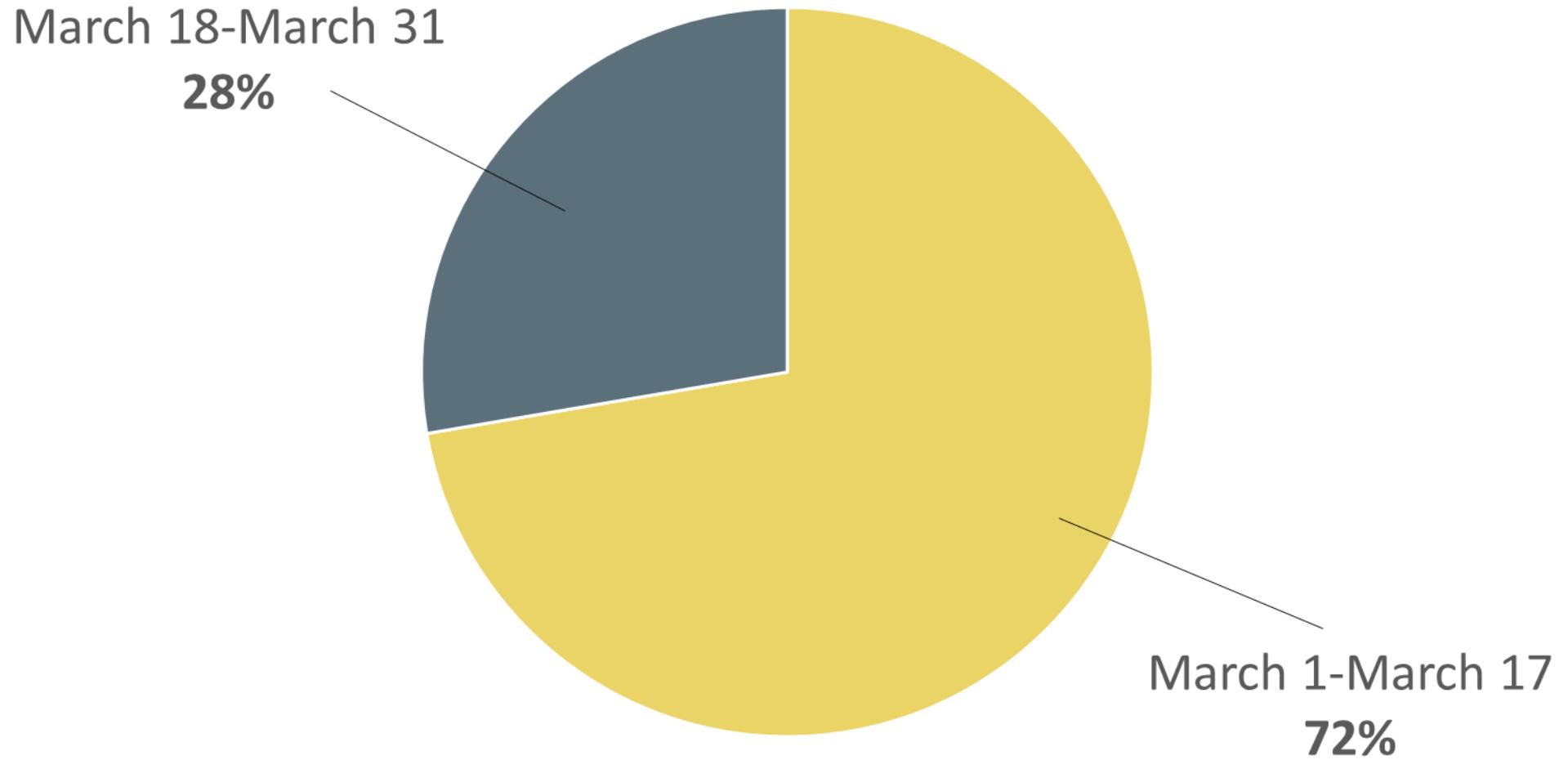
# Disposition of Intake Reports



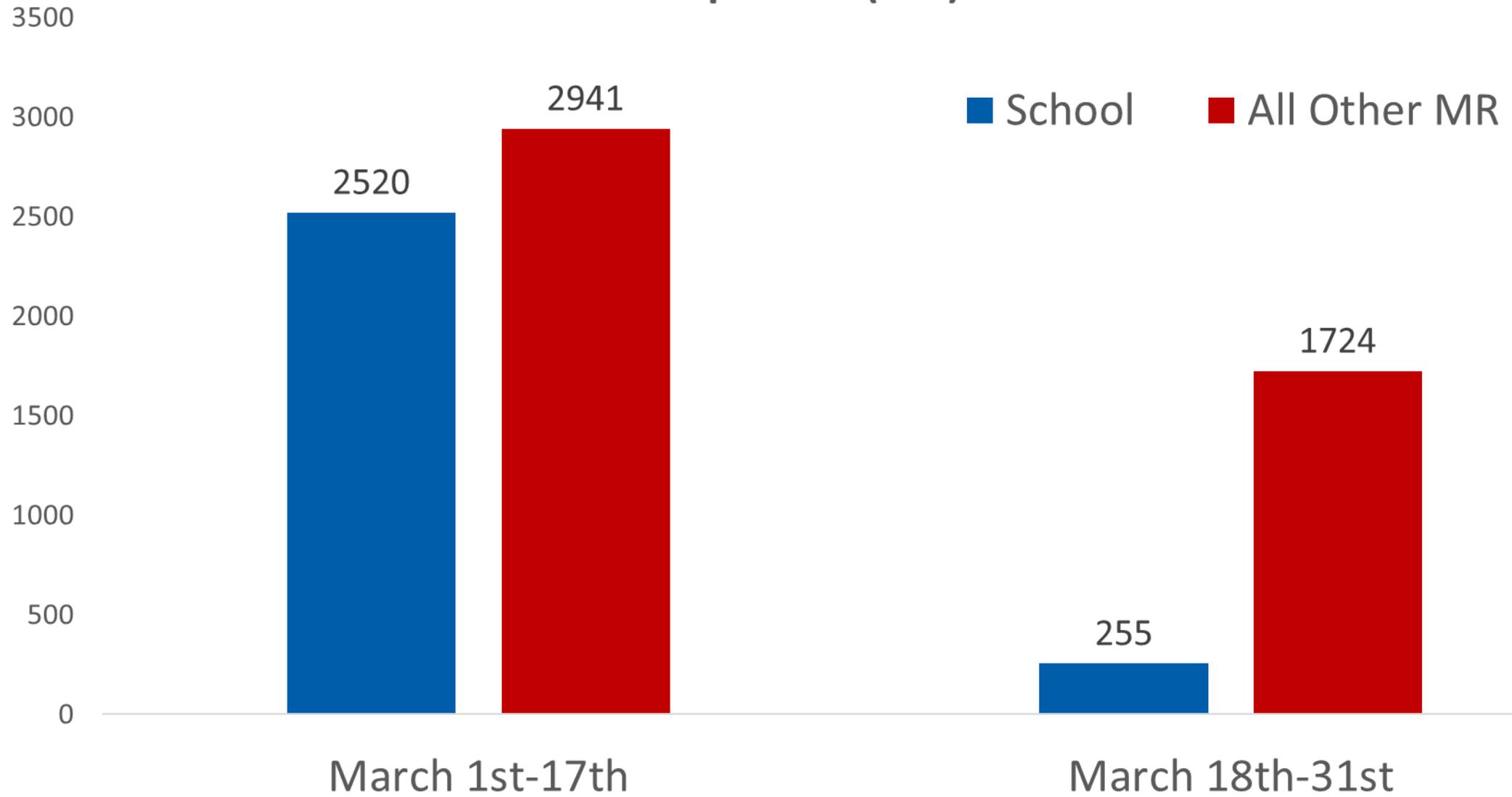
# Intake Reports March 2019 thru March 2020



# March 2020 Intake Reports



# School Mandated Reporters Compared to All Other Mandated Reporters (MR)



# Updates and Response

- CPS Intake Communications Center (CICC) inquiring and documenting reporter knowledge if families are currently or have recently been sick.
- Primarily utilizing Skype, FaceTime, or similar applications to facilitate virtual “face to face” contacts with children and families when there is a reasonable assumption there is no safety concerns in the home.
- Taking precautions when preparing for and responding to assigned assessment cases requiring an in-person contact.



# Updates and Response



GA Department  
of Education

# School Closure Timeline

- March 10 – Fulton County
- March 16 – Georgia schools closed through March 31
- March 26 – school closure order extended through April 24
- April 1 – school closures extended for remainder of school year

# COVID-19 and Schools

**Governor Kemp: Georgia schools to remain closed for remainder of this school year;**  
[USED approves Georgia's testing and accountability waivers](#)

[Open Letter from Superintendent Woods:](#)

School buildings are closed, but the hearts of educators remain open

## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Schools



The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is working closely with the Office of the Governor, the Georgia Department of Public Health (GaDPH), and other agencies to ensure local school districts, parents, and students have the

most accurate and up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 (commonly called coronavirus). State School Superintendent Richard Woods is a member of Governor Brian Kemp's Coronavirus Task Force, and GaDOE's Office of School Climate and Safety is communicating regularly with GaDPH and its Commissioner, Dr. Kathleen Toomey.

This site contains the most up-to-date guidance for school districts along with resources for parents and families.

### >> Trending K-12 Topics >>

- [GaDOE Guidance: Grades/course completion, promotion/retention, graduation requirements, SBOE waivers for districts](#)
- [Georgia Home Classroom](#)
- [Graduating Seniors](#)
- [Public WiFi locations](#) (interactive map) **NEW!**
- [Testing Guidance](#)
- [Serving Students with Disabilities Online](#)
- [Georgia Aquarium's At-home Learning Resources](#)
- [COVID-19 Emotional Support Resources](#) **NEW!**

[Home](#) > COVID-19 K-12 Resources Homepage



[Georgia Department of Community \(DPH\) Health's Daily COVID-19 Status Report](#)

#### Quick Links

- [School closure information](#)
- CDC: [Guidance](#) | [FAQs](#)
- [DPH Guidance](#)
- GaDOE: [Pandemic Planning Guidance for School](#) | [Office of School Safety & Climate](#)
- [President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America](#)

#### Georgia's COVID-19 Hotline

The State of Georgia has a new COVID-19 hotline. If you believe that you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to the novel coronavirus, please contact your primary care doctor, an urgent care

<https://www.georgiainsights.com/coronavirus.html>



# Georgia Insights

School Closures 

Students 

CARES Act Funding 

School Meals 

Graduating Seniors 

School Districts 

Distance Learning 

Families 

Testing 

Crisis Contacts 

Educators 

Special Education 



An initiative of the [Georgia Department of Education](#).  
Richard Woods, *State School Superintendent*



## COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Schools

[COVID-19 K-12 Resource Homepage](#) > CARES Act



# Crisis Contacts

### [Georgia Crisis & Access Line \(GCAL\)](#) 1-800-715-4225

GCAL is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year to help you or someone you care for in a crisis.

### [1-855-GA-CHILD](#) (1-855-422-4453)

Report concerns or suspected child abuse.

### [CRISIS TEXT LINE](#)

Text HOME to **741741** to connect with a Crisis Counselor. Free support is available 24/7.

### [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) - 1-800-273-8255

The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

### [Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line](#) - 1-866-399-8938

The Georgia COVID-19 Emotional Support Line provides 24/7 free and confidential assistance to callers needing emotional support or resource information as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Emotional Support Line is staffed by volunteers, including mental health professionals and others who have received training in crisis counseling.

### [CARES Warm Line](#) - 1-8 4 4 -326-54 00 (8:30AM - 11:00PM)

Call or text the CARES Warm Line for substance abuse challenges every day of the year.

### [COVID-19 Hotline](#) - (8 4 4 ) 4 4 2 -2681

The State of Georgia has a new COVID-19 hotline. If you believe that you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to the novel coronavirus, please contact your primary care doctor or an urgent care clinic. Please do not show up unannounced at an emergency room or health care facility.

### [Peer Warm Line](#) - 888-945-1414

The Peer Warm Line provides Georgians the opportunity to receive peer support over the phone 24 hours a day.

# Reporting During a Pandemic

- Still required
- Who's reporting?
  - Teachers
  - Calls
  - IT reports (Go Guardian, etc.)

# Reporting During a Pandemic

- 181 school districts
- 2400+ schools
- Distance Learning/School at Home will vary widely
- Access to students will vary widely
  - Digital platforms
  - Cell service
  - Restrictions
  - Meal service

# How to Help

- Call
- Email
- **REPORT**
- What is the new safety net?

# School Re-entry

What will mandated reporting look like?

- Timelines?
- What's reportable?
- New schools?
- New guardians?





# Reporting Child Maltreatment

# Report by calling 1-855-GACHILD (422-4453)

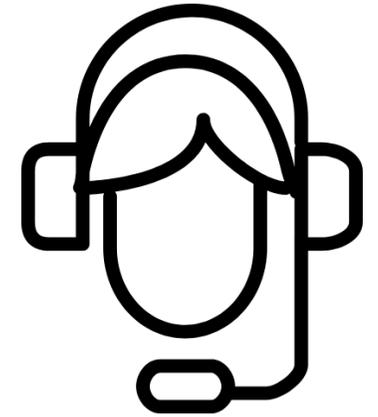
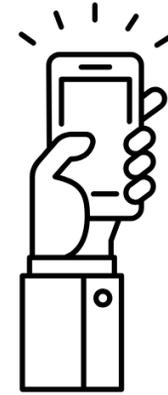
It is helpful to know

- Demographic information of child
- Care takers, who is in the house
- Injury/ situation specifics
- Risk factors
- Prior concerns
- Child's current safety



# What might DFCS ask?

1. What happened and who is involved?
2. Describe your observations.
3. When and where did the incident occur?
4. What was going on before, during, and after the specific incident/circumstances/alleged maltreatment you are concerned about?
5. Can you describe the caregiver's ability to protect/provide for the child and the child's ability to protect/provide for themselves?
6. Family supports, additional comments, or worker safety concerns?



# Electronic Ways to Report

**Two options for submitting this completed form electronically.**

- **Option One:** E-mail the completed Georgia Mandated Reporter form to [customer\\_services\\_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:customer_services_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov) or fax the form to [229-317-9663](tel:229-317-9663). You will receive an auto-reply confirmation and possibly a return phone call within 2 hours to acknowledge your report and collect any additional information needed. Please include a number where you can be reached on the report.

To request a PDF version of the form, contact [customer\\_services\\_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:customer_services_dfcs@dhs.ga.gov)

# Electronic Ways to Report

- **Option 2:** Complete the digital form located at <https://cps.dhs.ga.gov>. A private code is needed to access the digital form which requires you complete the online mandated reporter training through Proolutions.

<https://proolutionstraining.com>



<https://cps.dhs.ga.gov>

# When to call **911**

## Present Danger:

- Currently occurring
- Serious unexplained injury
- Left unattended in a parking lot
- Parent is unconscious due to drugs and there are young children in the home, or parent behavior is very bizarre

Calling 911 and DFCS may be necessary. Law enforcement is designed to respond within minutes, whereas DFCS may respond as soon as they get the report or within 24 hours.

# After the Report is Made

- School personnel
  - Will receive confirmation of report, additionally they will also receive case outcome within 5 days of completion of investigation *if the case is substantiated*
  - DFCS must send confirmation of report receipt to mandated reporter within 24 hours of the intake report.
- You may be called back to gather more information needed or to clarify.
- There is the potential that you will need to appear in court.
- Individuals with reports of child abuse that have been **investigated and substantiated** by DFCS will be placed on a state **Child Abuse Registry**

# **Resources for Mandated Reporters**

# Prevention Resources for Professionals

- Share signs of abuse and mandated reporting tips with frontline helpers
  - Build rapport and provide encouragement.
  - Ask open-ended questions to engage children. Ex: "How is learning from home going?" "How do you feel today?" "Tell me more about that."
- Participate in online prevention trainings
  - Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training – free at [www.FlipTheSwitchCampaign.org](http://www.FlipTheSwitchCampaign.org)
  - Protecting Children During a Crisis – [www.D2L.org](http://www.D2L.org)
- Call/Zoom and check in on children you are concerned about
- Darkness to Light's [Safe Online Learning: For Teachers](#)

# Prevention Resources for Parents

- Participate in online prevention trainings
  - Darkness to Light's [Talking to Children about Safety from Sexual Abuse](#) –free using code TALK2020
- Help parents create a COVID-19 Family Safety Plan
  - Use this [example](#) from Stop It Now!
  - Talk to children about safe touch, consent and personal boundaries
  - [Hot Chocolate Talk](#) from Committee for Children – What to Say at Every Age
- Blog for Parents about Online Safety – NetSmartz
  - <https://www.missingkids.org/blog/2020/child-online-safety>
- Committee for Children - Second Step: <https://www.secondstep.org/covid19support>
- Monique Burr Foundation - Child Safety Matters: <https://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org/covid-19-important-announcement/>
- For related questions please contact: [prevention@gacfca.org](mailto:prevention@gacfca.org)

# 1-800-CHILDREN

(1-800-244-5373) Se Habla Español



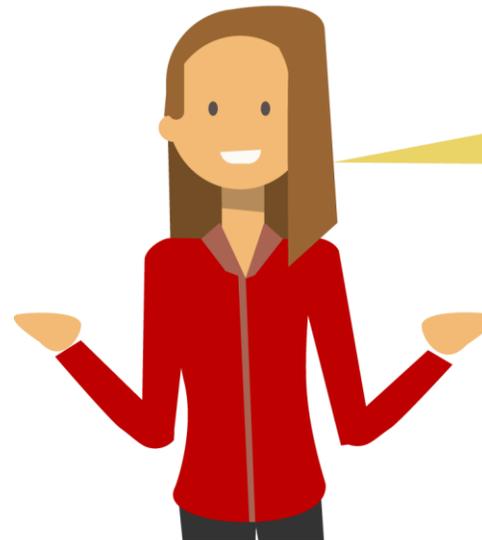
[www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org](http://www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org)

## Why People Call

- Caregiver Support, Counseling
- Community Programs
- Domestic Violence
- Housing and Basic Needs
- Afterschool and Child Programs

## The Helpline Serves

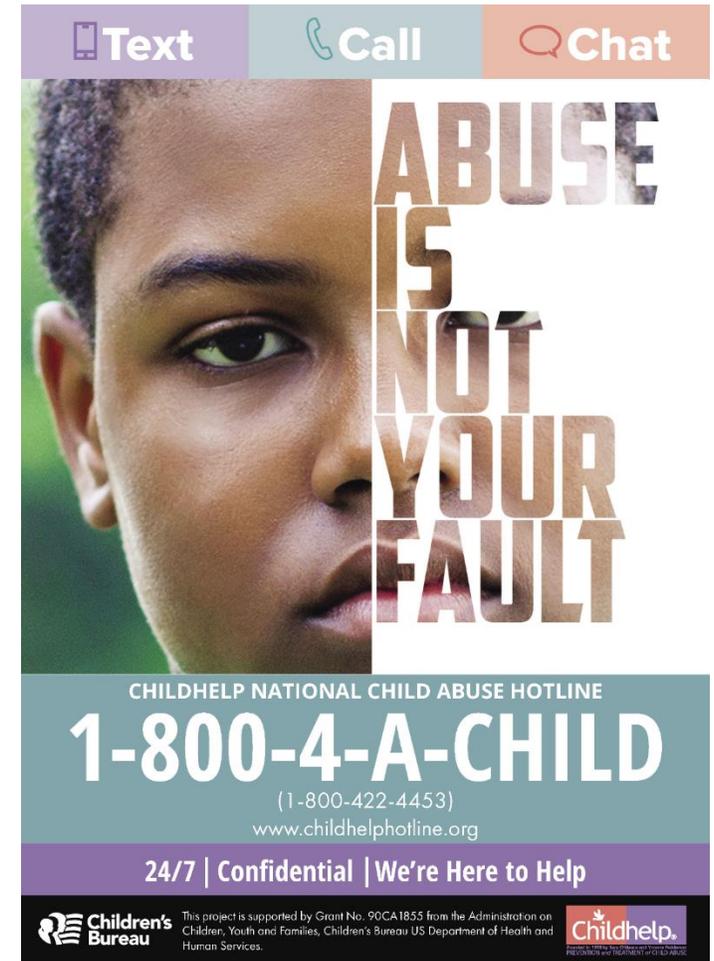
- Professionals that work with families
- Parents and Grandparents
- Relatives or Other Caregivers
- Crime Victims or Survivors of Abuse
- Faith Communities



Sometimes a  
family may  
just need  
**RESOURCES!**

# Childhelp

- Resources for children and youth who want to make a report via text or chat.
  - Live Chat Line:  
<https://www.childhelp.org/childhelp-hotline/>
  - Text or Call 1-800-422-4453
- A great alternative for children and youth who cannot call the 1-855-GA-CHILD Hotline directly.



Text Call Chat

**ABUSE IS NOT YOUR FAULT**

CHILDHELP NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

**1-800-4-A-CHILD**  
(1-800-422-4453)  
[www.childhelp hotline.org](http://www.childhelp hotline.org)

24/7 | Confidential | We're Here to Help

Children's Bureau This project is supported by Grant No. 90CA1855 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau US Department of Health and Human Services. Childhelp. PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF CHILD ABUSE

# Mandated Reporting Tip Sheets- Adults

#Essential4Kids

## Kids Need All Adults to Report Abuse During COVID-19 Crisis

A resource for all adults describing signs of child abuse and where to report.  
Reporting child abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility.

### Kids are Counting on All Adults to Protect Them

This means YOU! This resource is for any adult who interacts with a child. It outlines signs of abuse and neglect and where to report.

In times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. However, reports of child abuse and neglect in Georgia have declined dramatically.

Children are not going to school, activities, places of worship and other public places where adults look out for their safety and well-being.

### Trust your Gut

If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe - report.

### Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services

When you report, you are asking for a professional to help a child and their family. You do not need proof. You are not making an accusation.

### You May Be the Only Person to Act

If you reasonably suspect a child is unsafe - report.

Anonymous reports are accepted from anyone. Anyone making a report in good faith is protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action. Your identity is held confidential and will not be revealed.

### Where To Report

24-hour/7 days a week

1-855-GACHILD

(1-855-422-4453)

or online at <https://cps.dhs.ga.gov/>

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

### Some Signs a Child is Not Safe

#### Physical abuse

- Child appears frightened of the caregiver.
- Child has burns, bites, broken bones, bruising, black eyes or complaints of pain.
- Caregiver offers no explanation of a child's injury, the parent "blames" the child's behavior or personality for the injury. Ask yourself "Does the story match the injury?"

#### Sexual abuse

- Child attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment.
- Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior for their age.
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Witnessing an adult inappropriately touching a child, watching pornography with a child or saying sexual things to a child.

#### Emotional Abuse

- Child shows extremes in behavior: overly aggressive or compliant.
- Appears emotionally unattached to caregiver and others.
- Caregiver constantly blames, belittles or berates the child and refuses to help the child when needed.

#### Neglect

- Child begs or steals food, has severe poor hygiene or states that no one at home provides care.
- Witnessing a child using alcohol or other drugs.
- Highly stressful family situations and/or adults in home abusing alcohol or other drugs.
- Unlocked weapons or guns in the home.



Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

This document was adapted with permission from Missouri KidsFirst [www.missourikidsfirst.org](http://www.missourikidsfirst.org).



Free mandated reporter training available at [www.PCAGeorgia.org](http://www.PCAGeorgia.org), click on the **Training** tab.  
To locate support resources for families wherever you live in Georgia go to [www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org](http://www.PCAGeorgiaHelpline.org).

#Essential4Kids

## Kids Need Schools to Continue Reporting Abuse During COVID-19 Crisis

Empowering teachers, counselors, bus drivers and nutrition staff in their role as mandated reporters during the COVID-19 Crisis.

### Students Not Being in School Creates Barriers to Reporting Abuse

In times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. However, reports of child abuse and neglect in Georgia have declined dramatically. The ability to speak up for kids' safety is crucial at this time.

### To Report Effectively, Explain how the Suspected Abuse has Impacted the Child

Example: (Child) has not engaged in the virtual classroom in 10 days, but has internet access. I have made 5 failed attempts to contact parents. Concerned that (child's) lack of participation is negatively impacting his/her education. (Child) experienced physical abuse one year ago.

### Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services

If you reasonably suspect a child is unsafe - report. You do not need proof. You are not making an accusation. You are asking for a professional to help a child and their family.

### You May Be the Only Person to Act

If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe - report.

### Where To Report

24-hour/7 days a week

1-855-GACHILD (1-855-422-4453)

or online at <https://cps.dhs.ga.gov/>

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

Children & Youth can speak to a counselor by calling 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) or visiting [www.ChildHelp.org](http://www.ChildHelp.org) to live chat or text.

### Helpful Tips for Protecting Children

Continue to let students know you remain a supportive, caring adult in their lives:

- Check in regularly with students and/or caregivers. Provide encouraging messages.
- Ask questions to engage children. Ex: "Give me one word that describes how you feel today?" "How is learning from home different from learning at school?"

### Signs of Concerns:

- For students with technology/internet access: lack of virtual attendance or homework not completed over a long period of time.
- If you have had no contact at all with a family after many repeated phone calls/messages.
- If a child communicates they feel unsafe, you see a child in a dangerous environment or you notice a significant change in a child's mood/behavior.

### Make an extra effort with children who:

- Have a history of emotional, sexual, physical abuse or neglect, drug use or discussed/attempted suicide.
- Are responsible for the care of other children or live in a highly stressful family situation with limited support systems.
- Require assistance due to physical, mental, behavioral or medical disabilities or delays.

### Legal Responsibilities and Protections:

- School personnel are mandated reporters. If you have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, you must directly report it immediately.
- No administrator or supervisor may impede or inhibit any report.
- When you make a report in good faith you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action.



Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

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<https://abuse.publichealth.gsu.edu/free-online-mandated-reporting/>

# Middle & High School



If someone hurts you,  
**IT'S OK TO TELL!**

Si una persona te hace daño, no tengas miedo de contárselo a alguien confiable.

**GO**  
to a safe place  
Busca un lugar seguro

**TELL**  
a trusted adult, teacher, counselor  
Avisa a un adulto, maestro, o consejero confiable



**OR Report**  
to DFCS **1-855-GA-CHILD**  
(1-855-422-4453)  
O repórtalo al DFCS 1-855-GA-CHILD

For questions or support call: **1-800-CHILDREN**  
Si tiene alguna pregunta o necesita ayuda llame al (1-800-244-5373)

Have you ever been forced or pressured to engage in sexual activity in exchange for money, food, drugs, shelter, or anything else?  
¿Alguna vez alguien te haya presionado a tener relaciones sexuales a cambio de dinero, comida, drogas, un lugar donde vivir, o cualquier otra cosa?  
**Call: 1-844-8GA-DMST (1-844-842-3678)**

# Elementary Schools

**IT'S OK TO TELL**  
if someone hurts you!  
Si una persona te hace daño, no tengas miedo de contárselo a alguien confiable.



**GO**  
to a safe place  
Busca un lugar seguro

**TELL**  
a trusted adult, teacher, counselor  
Avisa a un adulto, maestro, o consejero confiable

**OR CALL**  
Child Protective Services  
**1-855-GA-CHILD**  
(1-855-422-4453)



O llama a los servicios de protección de niños 1-855-GA-CHILD

For questions or support call  
Si tiene alguna pregunta o necesita ayuda llame al

**1-800-CHILDREN**  
(1-800-244-5373)

# Free Online Mandated Reporting Training

ProSolutions offers free, online mandated reporting (MR) training

Three types of MR trainings:

1. Mandated Reporters: Critical Links in Protecting Children in Georgia
2. Child Abuse and Neglect: Mandated Reporting Requirements for Employees, Volunteers, and Contractors of Georgia Public Schools
3. Mandated Reporting Requirements: A Track for Georgia Medical Professionals



Visit <https://prosolutionstraining.com> to access the trainings

# Free In-Person Mandated Reporting Training

PCA Georgia offers free, in-person mandated reporting (MR) training

- Over 50 approved trainers throughout the state
- Interactive activities and scenarios
- Questions answered in real-time by trained professionals
- Hosting two Trainings of the Trainer in June

Visit [www.PCAGeorgia.org](http://www.PCAGeorgia.org) to learn more

**\*\* We are not taking in-person training requests for dates from now until the end of April based on best practices to prevent COVID-19 transmission.**







 **Prevent Child Abuse**  
Georgia™  
[www.PCAGeorgia.org](http://www.PCAGeorgia.org)

# Contact

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia  
[PreventChildAbuseGA@gsu.edu](mailto:PreventChildAbuseGA@gsu.edu)

[www.PCAGeorgia.org](http://www.PCAGeorgia.org)

[Webinar Recording](#)

