

What You NEED To Know

Who is mandated to report?

Teachers, paraprofessionals, all administration, and support staff in an educational setting.

Why is reporting required?

Kids can't protect themselves and will seek help for bad situations from people they believe can or will help them. People in helping professions are therefore legally protected and required to intervene when they have reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected.

What should I report?

If you know or have reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected or that this has happened within the prior 3 years, you must call Law Enforcement or Human Services. You can only report what you know and the age or identity of the perpetrator is not necessary. You need a good faith, honest believe that abuse or neglect is occurring.

How and where do I report?

Verbally within 24 hours, and in writing within 72 hours to either Law Enforcement or Human Services.

What information should I report?

Your contact information, the child's name, age and address, contact information for the child's parents, the name of the perpetrator, if known, and as much information as the child shared, using the child's words when possible. It will also be helpful to provide any information you have about the child's language, siblings, risks, any observations of past concern, any interventions you are aware of, any special needs or limitations, the child's demeanor, school performance/attendance, attitude, any actions which have already been taken, and who, if anyone else, you've told.

Do NOT call the child's parents yourself!

Leave this to the professionals who investigate the report. Your only responsibility is to report the situation. If the parent is the perpetrator or tells the perpetrator of the report, the child could be in danger and/or the investigation will be irreparably harmed. The law protects you – make the report and Law Enforcement or Human Services handle the rest.

You can't predict how a child will tell..... the report commonly comes out in pieces, as the child gauges your reaction. If the child feels believed, and if it is safe to tell more, the child will continue or come back with more information.

- **LISTEN**
- **REMAIN CALM**
- **NEVER ASK A CHILD A LEADING OR POINTED QUESTION THAT MAY SUGGEST AN ANSWER**
- **DO NOT PRESS FOR DETAILS**
- **DON'T PROMISE YOU WON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE OR MAKE PROMISES ABOUT THE FUTURE**
- **DON'T MAKE STATEMENTS JUDGING THE SITUATION**

Why is reporting difficult?

You may be afraid of what will happen if you report and you may be asking yourself: What if I'm wrong (or not?) What if the report "destroys" the family? (What if it's already destroyed and you could help prevent further damage?) What if there is retaliation? (the abuser won't know who you are until much later in the process, if ever, and retaliation RARELY occurs.) This is really none of my business...(To the contrary, the law makes this your business, and you could be prosecuted and jailed for not reporting.) No one will know if I just keep quiet. (Don't count on it.....the child may seek help elsewhere and tell the person who does help them that you didn't.)

What happens after a report is made?

Law Enforcement and Human Services will do a joint investigation, which may be traditional (serious allegations) or family-strength based (family assessment). They will collect information from many sources and may also take a formal "statement" from you.