

MANDATED REPORTERS

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately, when they have “reasonable cause to believe” that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected.

Privileged communication between professional and client is not grounds for failure to report.

You may have to testify in court regarding any incident you report.

State law protects the identity of all mandated reporters, and you are given immunity from legal liability as a result of reports you make in good faith.

If you fail to report, you are subject to criminal liability and some professionals may be subject to penalties by their regulatory or licensing boards.

To report suspected child abuse call:

Illinois Child Abuse Hotline:

1-800-25ABUSE
(1-800-252-2873)

Or your local law enforcement agency

Mandated Reporters are:

- Medical Personnel
- School Personnel
- Social Service/Mental Health Personnel
- Law Enforcement Personnel
- Coroner/Medical Examiner Personnel
- Child Care Personnel
- Members of the Clergy

What conditions must exist before DCFS will become involved in the case?

- The victim must be under the age of 18.
- The alleged perpetrator must be a parent, step-parent, paramour of the natural parent, guardian, foster parent, immediate family member, any person living in the home of the child, a person who was in a position of authority over the child (teacher, doctor, etc.), or a person responsible for the welfare of the child (babysitter, daycare, etc.).
- There must be a specific incident of abuse or neglect or a specific set of circumstances involving suspected abuse or neglect.
- There must be either demonstrated harm or a substantial risk of physical or sexual injury to the child.

If the report does not meet all these elements, DCFS has no jurisdiction. The Hotline intake worker will refer the reporter to the police or other agency.

The police may still open a case and investigate even when there is no DCFS involvement. Not all perpetrators may be in a position of care, custody, or control of a child. The perpetrator may be a stranger or simply an acquaintance.

You are required by law to report to one of the following:

- Department of Children and Family Services
- The Police Department
- The Sheriff's Department

When making a Hotline Call, you will be asked to provide the following information:

- Name, address, and age of victim(s)
- Name and address of parent(s) or guardian, and siblings to the victim
- Details of abuse, including specifics of the incident(s), location and severity of injuries, if there is any physical evidence.
- Any information provided by the child or behavior witnessed by the Mandated Reporter
- Any other relevant information that would expedite the investigation, such as directions to the victim's home or information about potential risks to the investigation.

What if I am wrong? It is better to err on the side of reporting, rather than risk injury or death to a child.

What if I am not sure a child is being abused? It is not necessary for you to prove abuse or neglect, only have reasonable suspicion.

What if my supervisor will not allow me to report? You do not need permission to report. It is your legal responsibility to report. It is a Class A Misdemeanor if you interfere with someone making a report.

Can I be sued? As a mandated reporter you are immune from civil and criminal liability.

What if I don't report? You may be subject to criminal liability and could be found guilty of a misdemeanor. You could also be subject to civil liability from a child who is injured by your failure to report. More importantly, a child could be injured or killed.

Confidentiality:

Avoid discussing a situation with others, unless that person is directly involved with the case. Do not inform or get others involved in the situation unless it is absolutely necessary.

If you believe a child has been abused:

- Stay calm and try to act normal
- Do not let your interview of the child become an interrogation.
- Try not to bring unnecessary attention to the child, and do not make them feel as if they have done anything wrong or are being punished.
- Do not have the child bathe or change clothes
- Gather the information that will be requested by the Hotline
- Contact the Hotline and/or appropriate agency
- Do not contact the parents or caregiver if you suspect that they are responsible for the abuse

Interviewing a Child:

- Don't do too much.
- Stop the interview as soon as you are satisfied you have reasonable suspicion that something has occurred. There is no need to get into further detail.
- The interview should not be in the presence of other children or adults. There should only be one person interviewing the child.
- Maintain your openness and composure, regardless of how shocking a child's statements.
- Listen. Do not talk too much. Do not pressure the child to talk.
- Do not ask leading questions. Do not ask "why?" questions.
- When speaking, use the child's terms or words.
- Do not make assumptions and insert that information into your questions to the child.
- Remember or write down specific quotes or comments the child made
- Stop the conversation if the child shows signs of discomfort.

Remember...

You may already have enough information to make a Hotline report, without interviewing the child. This can include unsolicited statements, comments, or behavior witnessed by you or others. In this case, do not interview the child.

Law Enforcement and DCFS will conduct a Child Forensic Interview at the Advocacy Network for Children (or Advocacy Center). Your conversation with the child can negatively impact the results of this interview if it is not handled appropriately. It is better for the child to talk to as few as individuals as possible about the report. The goal is to conduct only one interview of the child, so as not to further traumatize the child.

You have fulfilled your responsibility by reporting to the Hotline and/or Law Enforcement. It is not your responsibility to investigate, interrogate, and solve the crime.

Phone Numbers:

Child Abuse Hotline for Illinois
1(800)252-2873

1-800-25A-BUSE

Advocacy Network for Children
1(217) 223-2272

Illinois State Police
1(217) 222-8424

Adams County State's Attorney
1(217) 277-2525

9-1-1 Center
Department of Children and Family Service
1(217) 221-2525

Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse



Brochure compiled by:

Quincy Police Department
Youth Investigations
110 South 8th Street
Quincy IL 62301
(217) 228-4470 or 228-4475

and

Advocacy Network for Children
Administrative Office
531 Hampshire Street, 2nd Floor
Quincy, IL 62301
(217) 223-2272

and

Department of Children and Family Services
Field Office
107 North 3rd St., Suite 2
Quincy, IL 62301
(217) 221-2525