

REPORT ABUSE, IT'S THE LAW!

NEW INFORMATION

- Failure to report known or suspected child abuse, neglect or abandonment is now a third degree felony punishable by up to five years in prison, five years probation, and a \$5,000 fine.
- College and university law enforcement and administrators are now required to report known or suspected child abuse occurring on campuses or at events sponsored by their institutions. Failure to report may subject the institution to a fine.

If you know or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected by parents, caregivers, other adults or juvenile sex offenders, you must immediately report what you know or suspect to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

WHO IS A "MANDATED REPORTER"?

Although everyone has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect and abandonment, only those in certain occupations designated by law as professionally mandated reporters are required to provide their names when making a report to the Abuse Hotline. Mandated reporters' names are entered into the record of the report, but remain confidential. Mandated reporters include those in the following occupations:

- Chiropractor/chiropractor physician
- Day care center worker
- Foster care worker
- Hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of children
- Health professional
- Home visitor
- Institutional worker
- Judge
- Law enforcement officer
- Medical examiner
- Mental health professional
- Nurse
- Osteopath/osteopathic physician
- Physician
- Practitioner who relies solely on spiritual means for healing
- Professional child care worker
- Residential care worker
- School teacher
- School official or other school personnel
- Social worker

INFORMATION NEEDED

Details about the abuse or neglect you know or suspect is happening, including who is involved, what happened, when and where it happened, why it happened, the extent of any injuries, what the victim(s) said happened, and any other related details are very important. Information callers should have ready includes:

- Name, date of birth (or approximate age), race, and gender, for all adults and children involved
- Addresses for all subjects, including current location
- Relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the victim(s)

3 WAYS TO MAKE A REPORT

Call

1-800-962-2873
(1-800-96-ABUSE)
TDD: 1-800-453-5145

Fax

1-800-914-0004

Online at

<https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>

Other relevant information that would expedite an investigation, such as directions to the victim (especially in rural areas) and potential risks to the investigator, should be given to the abuse hotline counselor.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Keep reporting abuse until the situation is resolved. You may not have the legal right to know what steps are being taken to protect the child in question as a result of your report; however, you can help the child in other ways:

- Be a good listener—show that you understand and believe what the child tells you
- Be kind and supportive of the child
- Talk to the child’s teacher, school counselor, or minister—they may be in a position to reach out to the family
- If appropriate, you can support the family by offering to help with child care, chores, errands, etc.