
FACT SHEET

Child Abuse

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

Anyone "having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect" **must** report the case to any state or local law enforcement agency and to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$1000.

REPORTING

An oral report must be made immediately (within 48 hours) to nearest Child Protective Service Office, to the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400), or to the local law enforcement officials. As a follow-up, a written report must be made into the Department of Protective & Regulatory Services within five days.

Anyone who files a report is immune from civil or criminal liability--if the report is made in "good faith" and "without malice". *Good faith means the person took reasonable steps to learn the facts that were readily available and at hand. Without Malice means the person did not intend to injure or violate the rights of another person.*

CHILDREN MOST LIKELY TO BE ABUSED

- ~handicapped and/or retarded children
- ~unwanted children
- ~small preemies
- ~child with "will of own" - inquisitive, demanding

NEGLECT

- ~Obvious malnutrition
- ~Habitually dressed in torn and/or dirty clothes
- ~Unattended for long periods of time
- ~Begs for or steals food
- ~3- 4 standard deviation below normal height/weight
- ~Lack of personal cleanliness
- ~Obvious fatigue & listlessness
- ~Needs glasses, dental care, medical attention
- ~Frequently absent or late to school
- ~Body and hair dirty, offensive body odor

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- ~Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns, especially when the child cannot adequately explain the cause
- ~Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern which may indicate the use of an instrument or a human bite-cigarette burns on the face arms or palms
- ~Wears unseasonable clothes
- ~Reluctance to sit down; cannot hold a pencil
- ~Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- ~Lack of reaction to pain
- ~Fear of going home or seeing parent
- ~Evidence of poor self concept
- ~Chronic runaway
- ~Complaints of beatings or other harsh treatment
- ~Injuries that appear after child isn't seen for several days
- ~Frequent absence or tardiness without reasonable explanation

SEXUAL ABUSE

- ~Physical signs of sexually transmitted disease
- ~Pregnancy in young girl
- ~Knowledgeable about sexual relations
- ~Reports sexual assault
- ~Complaints of pain itching in genital area or evidence of trauma in genital area
- ~Suicide attempts
- ~Evidence of injury to the genital area
- ~Difficulty in sitting or walking
- ~Extreme fear of being alone with member of the opposite sex
- ~Engages in sexually suggestible or promiscuous behavior
- ~Drawing/writings may have strong, often bizarre sexual theme
- ~Unusual odors around genital area
- ~Poor peer relationships

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- ~Speech disorders
- ~Developmental lags
- ~Overly adaptive behavior
- ~Conduct/habit disorders
- ~Delinquent behavior
- ~Substance behavior



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