

Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse

Who Is a Mandated Reporter?

Any individual, **paid or unpaid**, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child (anyone under 18 years old) is a mandated reporter and is required to make an immediate report of suspected abuse when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse.

What Type of Training Is Available for Mandated Reporters?

Employees are *required* and volunteers are encouraged to maintain 3 hours of training every 5 years on the topic of Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting. A free online course offered by University of Pittsburgh satisfies these requirements. You can access the online course by taking the following steps:

Step 1: Go to www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/

Step 2: If this is your first visit to the website, click "Registration" in upper left corner of screen. Enter your personal information and SUBMIT. It may take a minute, but you will be assigned a username and password which will be displayed on the bottom of the screen. Select the "Click Here to log in" at the bottom of the screen.

Step 3: After logging in with your username and password, click on the blue link under the section titled "Your Courses".

Step 4: Upon completion of the course, please print the certificate and submit a copy to the school office.

How Is Child Abuse Defined?

Basically, child abuse is defined as when an individual acts or fails to prevent something that causes serious harm to a child under the age of 18. This harm can take many forms, such as serious physical injury, serious mental injury, or sexual abuse or exploitation. The definition of child abuse requires that acts or failures to act be committed **intentionally, knowingly** or **recklessly**.

What Are Some Indicators of Physical Abuse?

Unexplained bruises, welts, human bite marks, or bald spots; numerous bruises in various stages of healing; marks on many surfaces of the body; unexplained burns, especially cigarette or immersion burns; withdrawal or aggression – behavioral extremes; uncomfortable with physical contact; afraid to go home; dressed inappropriately for the weather; cringes when approached by an adult (fears getting hit); overreacts to accidents such as spilling milk; does not want to talk about home life; extreme attachment to parents; extreme attentiveness to needs of parents

What Are Some Indicators of Psychological Abuse?

Unattended medical needs; consistent lack of supervision; persistent hunger, poor hygiene or inappropriate dress; distended stomach or emaciated body; delayed physical development; substance abuse; regularly displays fatigue or listlessness; steals food or begs; habit disorders (sucking, rocking, etc.); passive or aggressive behavior extremes; neurotic traits such as sleep disorders or inhibition of play

What Are Some Indicators of Sexual Abuse?

Pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia; frequent urinary or yeast infections; torn, stained or bloody underclothing; venereal disease; a child's report or self-disclosure; sexual knowledge beyond what is natural for a child; preoccupation with their body; acting out sexual behavior; withdrawal,

chronic depression; self-devaluation and lack of confidence; problems with bedtime or afraid to go to bed; bedwetting – especially if it begins in a child who has been dry

How to Report Child Abuse? - If you are a mandated reporter, you must report suspected abuse immediately by phone and electronically. Do not simply inform a program director or school administrator of the incident. You must personally take the following two steps:

1) *Reporting Abuse - ChildLine*

Call ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. ChildLine is available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. As a mandated reporter, you must provide your name and contact information when making the call.

2) *Electronically- <https://www.reportsuspectedabuse.com/>*

After making the call, mandated reporters must follow up with an electronic report completed on the CY-47 form within 48 hours of making the oral report. The report is submitted directly to ChildLine via the Child Welfare Information Solution portal. You will need to include your name, telephone number and email address. You will also need to include any other actions you have taken. You will receive an email confirmation that your report has been received; you should print and keep this confirmation for your records.

What Happens When I File a Report?

Step 1: Call ChildLine (24-hour hotline) 800-932-0313.

Step 2: Complete written report (CY-47).

Step 3: Notify a school administrator.

Step 4: ChildLine informs local county Children and Youth Services (Children and Youth Services has 24-hours to meet with child).

Step 5: Children and Youth Services have 30 days to complete an investigation of child and family.

Step 6: Case is classified as founded (legal system determines that abuse occurred), indicated (medical evidence that abuse occurred) or unfounded (lack of evidence that abuse occurred). Determination is made regarding what, if any, services are needed.