

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is defined as a non-accidental injury or a pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse includes non-accidental physical injury, physical neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.



Your call is preventing child abuse.

Commit To Prevent[®]



1-800-CHILDREN
(244-5373)

Confidential helpline of support, encouragement, information and local referrals for parents and caregivers. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



What Everyone Should Know About



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PHYSICAL ABUSE is any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by a parent or caregiver which results in or threatens serious injury. Often parents who physically abuse their children do not intend to injure them, but get carried away by anger and frustration in their own lives.

NEGLECT is the failure to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision. Neglect is often a chronic problem resulting, not from poverty, but from lack of parental knowledge as to the proper care required by children.

SEXUAL ABUSE is any physical contact with a child for the sexual gratification of the adult or older child. Threats or coercion are often present. Other terms for sexual abuse include child molestation, incest (if the abuser is a member of the child's family), or child pornography. Usually the child knows the abuser.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is an important factor in all forms of child abuse and can also be abuse in and of itself. Sometimes emotional abuse is the failure to provide understanding and nurturing necessary for a child's healthy growth and development. Emotional abuse may also include the use of words that threaten, harshly criticize, ridicule, or harass a child to the point that it interferes with the child's ability to function.

Why does child abuse happen?

There is no easy answer to this question, many factors are involved. Child abuse is more likely to occur when:

- There is a lack of parenting knowledge and skills.
- Parents are isolated with no close friends or family to offer support or help with the demands of raising a family.
- Parents may not understand their child's developmental stages. They may have unrealistic expectations for their children's behavior or abilities.
- There is a drug, alcohol or domestic violence problem in the home.
- A parent views a child as a problem or different.
- There is a crisis or series of crises such

Child abuse crosses all economic, racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries. It is a myth that child abuse occurs only among poor families, or is more likely to occur in any particular ethnic group. Abusive parents can be your friends, your neighbors, or your relatives. For the most part, even in families in which maltreatment occurs, parents love their children and are doing the best they can. They are ordinary people caught in life situations beyond their control. Families need support. The majority of parents love their children and want to be better parents. The best ways to prevent abuse and neglect is to provide parents with education and improved parenting skills.

For more information call 1-800-CHILDREN, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are here to help.

- as marital, financial, or employment problems, a major illness, etc.
- Parents themselves were abused as children.
- The parent may have unmet emotional needs or mental health issues.

Your call can protect a child.

Who should report a suspected case of child abuse or neglect?

The law says *anyone* who suspects a child is being abused, neglected, or is dependent is required to report (*KRS 620.030*).



Why Should I Make a Report?

Children cannot protect themselves. They must depend on adults around them to keep them safe. All too often, people's failure to make a report may lead to tragic results. After the death or serious injury of a child, it is common to hear from friends, neighbors, relatives and professionals that state they "thought something was wrong" but did not make a report. When making a report of suspected

abuse or neglect, you are taking a positive step to protect a child and prevent abuse.

Beyond helping keep children safe, your duty to report suspected abuse or neglect is also required by law. There are criminal penalties for failing to report. Any person who intentionally fails to report could be found guilty of a misdemeanor.

It is also important to remember that there are legal protections (immunity) for those who make a report in good faith.



If you feel the child is in immediate danger, call the police!

How sure must a person be before reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect?

Reporters don't need proof and don't need to have witnessed the abuse to make the report. You only need to suspect abuse.

Do people who report have to identify themselves?

It is helpful to the investigator, but it is not absolutely necessary for the person reporting to reveal their identity. The caller's identity is kept confidential and can only be released by a court order.

What will I need to tell them when I call to make a child abuse/neglect report?

Callers will be asked a series of questions when they call. Callers may be asked if there are additional risk factors such as the presence of drugs or firearms in the home, domestic violence or criminal activity. Additional information will assist in conducting a more thorough investigation. Questions that may be asked include the child(ren) name(s), their location and the extent of the abuse and/or neglect.

What happens when a report is made?

The time frame for interviewing the family and or a child is based on the level of risk present.

Where should a report be made?

Reports can be made from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) office in the county where the abuse/neglect has happened. OR by calling the twenty-four hour seven day a week statewide Child Abuse Report Hotline at 1-877-KY-SAFE1 (1-877-597-2331). For other states call 1-800-422-4453. If you feel the child is in immediate danger, call the police!

What can I be told about the child/abuse/neglect report?

Because of confidentiality and privacy laws, the amount of information that can be shared with the reporter may be limited.

Rarely a child is placed out of the home. When that happens, services are provided to safely reunite the family as soon as possible.