

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

Who is required to report child abuse or neglect?

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect can, in good faith, report. If you are identified as a mandated reporter, you are required by law to report your concerns to the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF), Child Abuse Hotline or law enforcement (RCW 26.44.030).

Mandatory reporters include:

- Medical practitioners
- Professional school employees
- Social service counselors
- Psychologists
- Placement and liaison specialists
- Host home programs employees or volunteers
- Coroners, medical examiners and licensed pathologists
- Pharmacists
- Licensed or certified child care providers or their employees
- Department of Social and Health Services employees
- Department of Children, Youth, and Families employees
- Department of Corrections employees who become aware of possible child abuse or neglect during the course of their employment
- State and private higher education employees
- Juvenile probation officers
- Law enforcement
- Licensed foster parents
- Licensed or certified group care providers and their employees
- Responsible living skills programs or HOPE centers employees
- Family and Children's Ombuds Office employees or volunteers
- Guardians ad litem (GALs)
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)
- Any adult who resides with a child who he or she suspects to have suffered severe abuse and who is capable of making a report
- Any supervisor with a nonprofit or for-profit organization who has a reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect caused by a person over whom he or she regularly exercises supervisory authority, provided that the person alleged to have caused the abuse or neglect is employed by, contracted by or volunteers with the organization and coaches, trains, educates or counsels a child or children, or regularly has unsupervised access to a child or children as part of the employment, contract or voluntary service



DCYF supports families and responds to concerns of abuse and neglect. Responses may include a DCYF worker visiting a family's home to meet with the family and children. They will assess what has happened as well as offer supports to increase the safety for the family.



What circumstances justify a report and when should I report?

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect or may be at risk of abuse or neglect, the report must be made at the first opportunity but in no case longer than 48 hours. "Reasonable cause" means a person witnesses or receives a credible written or oral report alleging abuse, including sexual contact or neglect of a child (RCW 26.44.030).

What is reportable?

- Physical abuse (defined in WAC 110-30-0030)
- Sexual abuse (defined in WAC 110-30-0030)
- Sexual exploitation (defined in WAC 110-30-0030)
- Negligent treatment or Maltreatment (defined in WAC 110-30-0030)
- Abandonment (defined in WAC 110-30-0030)

How do I report suspected child abuse and neglect?

- Contact DCYF Child Protective Services – 866-363-4276 Toll-free, 24/7 866-END-HARM
- Local Intake numbers and information about reporting abuse and neglect can be located at www.dcyf.wa.gov/safety/report-abuse.
- Law Enforcement.

What information will I be asked to provide?

- The name, address and age of the child and parents, stepparents, guardians or other persons caring for the child.
- Whether the mother or father is of American Indian/Alaska Native ancestry.
- The nature and extent of the alleged child abuse, neglect or sexual abuse, including the nature and extent of any alleged injury or injuries and previous injuries.
- Any other information that may be helpful in establishing the cause of the child's death, injury or injuries and the identity of the alleged perpetrator or perpetrators.

If a crime has been committed, law enforcement must be notified. Mandated reporters who knowingly fail to make a report or cause a report to be made shall be guilty of a gross misdemeanor (RCW 26.44.080).



If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov).

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