



### How do I report?

Childline is the 24-hour toll free telephone reporting system operated by the Department of Public Welfare to receive reports of suspected child abuse.

ChildLine forwards the report of suspected child abuse to the local county children and youth agency, which investigates the report to determine if the allegations can be substantiated as child abuse/neglect and also arranges for or provides the services that are needed to prevent the further maltreatment of the child and to preserve the family unit.

If the alleged perpetrator named in the report does not meet the definition of perpetrator under the CPSL, but does suggest the need for investigation, ChildLine will forward the information to the district attorney's office in the respective county. ChildLine also maintains a statewide central register, which contains the names and vital information about children who have been abused in PA since 1976. This information can be accessed by county children and youth agencies when investigating new reports of suspected child abuse.

### How do I learn whether or not the child was abused and what the agency is doing to protect the child from further abuse?

Mandated reporters may receive information from the county children and youth agency regarding the final status of the report, whether it was unfounded, indicated or founded, and the services provided or arranged by the agency.

### What will be done for the abused child?

It is the mission of the county children and youth agency to preserve the family whenever possible. Should the child be found to be in danger of continued harm, the child may be removed from the home. Through counseling, training and other support services, families learn to end the cycle of abuse and establish a parent/child relationship that will be free of physical and mental violence.

### How can I get more information?

Call your local county children and youth agency or ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313.



# ChildLine

## 1-800-932-0313

Child abuse hotline available 24 hours a day.



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

**Tom Corbett**  
Governor

**Gary D. Alexander**  
Secretary

# Mandated Reporters

Professionals Who Work  
with Children

**Help Prevent Child Abuse**

## What is the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL)?

The PA Child Protective Services Act was signed into law in 1975. It was enacted to protect children from abuse, allow the opportunity for healthy growth and development and, whenever possible, preserve and stabilize the family.

## What is child abuse?

Child abuse, according to the CPSL, includes any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury, or non-accidental serious mental injury to a child under 18 years of age, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to a child under 18 years of age, and serious neglect. "Recent" is defined as an abusive act within two years from the date ChildLine is called. Sexual abuse has no time limit.

Child abuse also includes any recent act, failure to act, or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator that creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.

## Who can be a perpetrator?

A perpetrator of child abuse can be a child's parent, the person responsible for the welfare of a child such as a baby sitter or day care staff person, an individual residing in the same home as the child who is at least 14 years of age, or a paramour of the child's parent regardless of whether or not they reside in the home. As a mandated reporter, you do not have to determine whether or not the person meets the definition of perpetrator in order to make the report.

## Who is mandated to report?

Individuals who, in the practice of their employment, occupation or practice of a profession, come into contact with children and have reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the care, supervision, guidance, or training of that person or of an agency, institution, organization or other entity with which that person is affiliated is a victim of child abuse.

## What happens when a report is made?

The county children and youth agency must begin an investigation within 24 hours. A thorough inquiry is conducted to determine if the child was abused and what services are appropriate for the child and family. This must be completed within 30 days unless the agency provides justification as to why the investigation cannot be completed, including attempts being made to obtain medical records or interview subjects of the report.

## Q What can I do if a child is not being cared for properly, but may not be an abused child?

A Reports about the safety of children including, but not limited to inadequate housing, clothing and supervision, should be referred to the county children and youth agencies for assessment as general protective services cases.

## Q What should I do when I suspect a child has been abused?

A The law says that mandated reporters must immediately make a report or notify the person in charge. The person in charge or the designee must make a report of suspected child abuse immediately to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313.

## Q How will I know if the report is made by the person in charge or the designee?

A The person in charge of the agency or his designee must notify the reporter when the report is made to ChildLine.

## Q What do I do if the report is not made by the person in charge of the agency?

A You should make the report yourself. Nothing prohibits mandated reporters from making a report directly to ChildLine.

## Q What else must a mandated reporter do after calling ChildLine?

A Mandated reporters must also complete a report of suspected child abuse (CY 47). This form can be obtained from the children and youth agency in your county and must be submitted within 48 hours to the county agency. However, it is acceptable to submit the information in letter form.

## Q Do I have to know for sure that the child was abused?

A NO. Your responsibility is to make the report when you suspect a child is abused. The caseworker of the county children and youth agency will investigate and determine whether the child was abused.

## Q Must I report?

A YES. Mandated reporters, by law, must report suspected abuse when you have reason to suspect on the basis of medical, professional or other training and experience, that the child has been abused.

## Q Am I a mandated reporter if I learn of the abuse from someone other than the child who was allegedly abused?

A YES. The child you suspect of being abused need not come directly before you in your professional or official capacity but must be under the care, supervision, guidance or training of the agency, institution, organization or other entity with which you are affiliated. While your role as a mandated reporter applies specifically to children under the care, supervision, guidance or training of the agency with which you are affiliated, if, outside of this role, you suspect a child has been abused, you may still make a report as a non-mandated reporter.

## Q Must I give my name?

A The law requires that mandated reporters identify themselves and where they can be reached. If clarification on the situation or additional information is needed, the caseworker will contact you.

## Q Will my name be released?

A NO. The law allows only the Secretary of Public Welfare to release the name of the reporter or anyone who cooperated in the investigation. With your written consent, you can voluntarily have your name released as the reporter.

## Q What could happen to me if I don't report?

A A mandated reporter who is convicted of willfully failing to report or refer suspected child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor of the third degree. A second or subsequent offense is a misdemeanor of the second degree. The maximum penalty for a misdemeanor of the third degree is \$2,500 and/or one year in jail; for a misdemeanor of the second degree it is \$5,000 and/or two years in jail.

## Q Will I have to testify in court?

A You may be required to provide information in a civil proceeding. Criminal charges are filed against some perpetrators. You may be subpoenaed to testify at a criminal proceeding. Some cases go to juvenile court if the agency petitions for custody of the child. You may be required to provide information in a civil proceeding.