In Pennsylvania, Mandated Reporters must report when they have **reasonable cause to suspect** abuse. This does not mean they must be certain, nor does it mean they should do an investigation to determine if it has occurred.

**Anyone** can commit child abuse. This includes adults, teenagers and/or children/peers. A report is required regardless of the relationship to the child, and/or if the offender’s name is unknown.

### DEFINING ABUSE

**9 Categories of Child Abuse:**

1. **Bodily Injury** – *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act*

2. **Fabricating, Exaggerating, or Inducing a Medical Symptom or Disease** – *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act*

3. **Serious Mental Injury** – *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury*

4. **Sexual Abuse or Exploitation** – *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act*

   This includes exploitative acts such as: looking at the sexual or intimate parts of a child, participating in sexually explicit conversation (both in-person or through a device), actual or simulated sexual activity, or producing visual depiction of actual or simulated sexual activity.

   Additionally, criminal offenses such as rape (including date rape and rape by a peer), statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, indecent exposure, prostitution and human trafficking are included under this definition.

5. **Likelihood of Bodily Injury** – *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act*

6. **Likelihood of Sexual Abuse or Exploitation** - *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly creating a reasonable likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation to a child through any recent act or failure to act*

7. **Serious Physical Neglect** – *Endangering a child’s life or health, threatening a child’s well-being, causing bodily injury or impairing a child’s health, development or function through a lack of appropriate supervision or failure to provide essentials of life.*

8. **Specific Recent Acts of Child Abuse** – *Specific acts that have occurred within the past 2 years*

   *Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child
   *Unreasonably physically restraining or confining a child
   *Forcefully shaking, slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age
   *Interfering with the breathing of a child*
*Causing a child to be present where methamphetamine is being manufactured and police are investigating
*Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual (other than the child’s parent), who is required to register as a sexual offender, determined to be a sexually violent predator, or determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child

9. Death of a Child – *Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing the death of a child through any act or failure to act*

**Reporting**

A Mandated Reporter must report under any of these circumstances:

1. **comes into contact** with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through any regularly scheduled program, activity or service.

2. **is directly responsible for** the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or **is affiliated with** an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.

3. A **specific disclosure** is made to the mandated reporter that an **identifiable child** is the victim of child abuse.**

4. An individual 14 years of age or older makes a **specific disclosure** to the mandated reporter that the individual **has committed** child abuse.**

**In these circumstances, the mandated reporter has a duty to report even if the situation occurred outside of their scope of work or volunteer service.

**Where to report**

Reports can be submitted **electronically** via the Child Welfare Portal:  [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis)

Reports can also be made by calling Childline: 1-800-932-0313 and submitting a CY-47 to the Child Protective Services Office in the county where the abuse occurred.

**Disclosure Reminders**

- Believe the child and tell them you believe them. Explicitly say, “I believe you.”
- Let the child know he or she did the right thing by telling. Thank him or her for telling.
- Reassure the child that what happened was not his or her fault.
- Allow the child to set the pace and say as much or as little as he or she wishes.
- Don’t make promises you can’t keep.
- Let the child know you will have to tell someone.
- Don’t tell anyone who doesn’t need to know. This may include the child’s parents and your staff. Respect the child’s decision to share with you, and their confidence.

**Minimal Fact Questions:**

1. What happened?
2. Where did it happen?
3. When did it happen?
4. Who did it?
5. Was anyone else there?