

MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

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

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?

