



SAFETY IN ACTION

Mary Abbott Children's House



MANDATED REPORTING LAW

Oklahoma state law requires **ANY PERSON** who has reason to believe a child is abused, or is in danger of being abused, to immediately report suspicion of abuse to the police or DHS.

- EVERYONE in Oklahoma is a mandated reporter.
- Reporters are NOT required to have proof, only reasonable suspicion.
- A reporter's identity is kept confidential.
- Suspicions MUST be reported to DHS and/or law enforcement. Reporting internally does NOT absolve you of responsibility.
- Persons making a report in good faith are protected from liability.
- Failure to report is a criminal offense.

TO REPORT ALL SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN OKLAHOMA, CALL THE STATEWIDE DHS HOTLINE

1-800-522-3511

OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK.

IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS IN IMMINENT DANGER - CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY BY DIALING 9-1-1

WHAT TO REPORT

PHYSICAL ABUSE

If a child has concerning injuries AND discloses physical abuse, **act immediately by calling the police**

If, under any other circumstances, you have suspicion a child is being physically abused, [call the DHS hotline at 1-800-522-3511.](tel:1-800-522-3511)

SEXUAL ABUSE

- If you discover child sexual abuse, or a child discloses sexual abuse by an alleged perpetrator who has access to the child, [act immediately by calling the police.](#)
- If, under any circumstance, you have suspicion a child is being sexually abused, [call the DHS Hotline.](#)
- If you discover sexual exploitation of a child on the internet, [call the CyberTipline at 1-800-843-5678.](#)
- If you observe inappropriate contact, but it does not reach the level of suspected abuse, report your observation to a [supervisor](#) in your organization.

NEGLECT

If a child discloses neglect, or you suspect that a child is being neglected, [call the DHS Hotline.](#)

If you are concerned about a child, contact your [local Child Advocacy Center](#), such as Mary Abbott Children's House (405-579-5800), and ask for a family advocate to help you refer the family for services.

ALWAYS REPORT THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES

- Verbal disclosure of physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse.
- Non-accidental injuries.
- Clear indicators of inadequate caregiving.
- Direct observation of an inadequate home environment.
- Exposure to domestic violence.
- Exposure to drug manufacturing or drug use.
- Repeated runaway or truant children.

If you need support or are unsure whether or not to make a report, consult your local Child Advocacy Center. An advocate will evaluate your concerns and refer you to local resources that can help.

To locate a Child Advocacy Center near you, contact The National Children's Alliance.

nca-online.org
1-800-239-9950

HOW TO RESPOND TO CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

WHAT TO DO

- DO listen & stay calm.
- DO believe the child - disbelief can be detrimental to a child.
- DO reassure the child with statements such as:
 - You did the right thing by telling me.
 - I'm sorry that happened to you.
 - What happened wasn't your fault.
- DO tell the child what will happen next. Explain that you need to tell a professional who helps families with these situations. Assure the child it's okay to talk to the professional.
- DO contact DHS immediately and, if imminent danger is present, contact the police.
- DO provide all readily available information concerning the child's household, the nature of your concern, and the context surrounding the suspicion, discovery, or disclosure of abuse. Report the EXACT words the child used.

WHAT TO NOT DO

- DO NOT express disbelief, pass judgement, or have an emotional reaction in the presence of the child.
- Once the child discloses what happened and by whom, DO NOT question the child any further or probe for more details.
- DO NOT make promises such as promising not to tell.
- DO NOT ask the child to repeat the disclosure to other adults.
- DO NOT discuss the report with the family or with the suspect without permission and instruction from DHS or police investigators.



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NORMAN, OK 73069

405-579-5800

ABBOTT-HOUSE.ORG

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