

## CHILDCARE PROVIDERS:

# REPORT ABUSE IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

### Your role as a mandated reporter

Kids are counting on childcare providers to protect them. Childcare providers play a crucial role in supporting families and caring for the safety of children. Childcare providers are #Essential4Kids!

**Childcare providers are mandated reporters and are required by law to directly and immediately report child abuse and neglect if there is reasonable suspicion.**

**If a child expresses to you that they have been abused** Stay calm and listen with compassion. Tell the child, "I believe you." Only ask open ended questions, like "Tell me more." You do not need proof. You need reasonable suspicion. Avoid trying to dig for details or having different adults question the child's story. This can re-traumatize the child and damage the investigation and/or prosecution.

**Making a report is asking for help and services** When you report you are not making an accusation, you are asking for professional help, resources, and support for a child and their family.

**Legal responsibilities and protections** No owner or supervisor may impede or inhibit any report. When you make a report in good faith, you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action.

## Where To Report

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline  
1-800-392-3738 or 1-844-CAN-TELL  
Online at [dss.mo.gov/cd/can.htm](https://dss.mo.gov/cd/can.htm)

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.



## Reporting Effectively

**Explain how the suspected abuse has impacted the child.**

Be precise with dates, times, and locations, if available. Describe specific changes in behavior/emotions: expressions of fear, interactions with other children and adults, impact on grades, and/or impact of an unsafe environment.

## Signs a child is not safe

### Physical Abuse

Child appears frightened of the caregiver.  
Caregiver offers no/odd explanation of a child's injury. Does the story match the injury?

### Online Abuse

Unexplained gifts, money, game subscriptions  
Child presents themselves as older online.  
Child sends revealing photos or videos of oneself.  
Child becomes secretive: minimizing screens or hiding devices.

### Emotional Abuse

Caregiver consistently belittles or berates the child and refuses to help the child when needed.  
Child shows extremes in behaviors: overly aggressive or overly compliant.

### Sexual Abuse

Non-biological, transient caregivers in the home (a live in partner).  
Child attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment.  
Witnessing an adult watching pornography, inappropriately touching or saying sexual things to/with a child.

### Neglect

Caregiver is abusing alcohol or other drugs.  
Caregiver's physical/mental health prevents them from providing for child's basic needs.  
Highly stressful family situations  
Unlocked weapons or guns in the home

### Pay close attention to children who:

Take care of other children and/or have limited support systems.  
Require assistance due to physical, mental, behavioral or medical disabilities or delays.  
Live in a home with domestic violence.

**TRUST YOUR GUT: If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe - report.**