



LAW ENFORCEMENT:

KIDS NEED YOU TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Your role as a mandated reporter

Law Enforcement plays a pivotal role in the network of child welfare professionals that make communities safer for children and families. This resource is intended to support law enforcement's response to child abuse and neglect. Law enforcement is #Essential4Kids!

Legal Responsibilities Law enforcement officials are mandated reporters and legally required to report child abuse/neglect directly and immediately to Children's Division. A report of abuse/neglect to Law Enforcement alone does not fulfill this responsibility. Children's Division must also be notified.

Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services When you report you are asking for professional help, resources, and support for a child and their family.

Best Practices In cases of suspected sexual and physical abuse children need to be connected to their local Child Advocacy Center (CAC). A CAC Forensic Interviewer is trained to talk to children about abuse for the purposes of investigation and/or prosecution in a child friendly setting that minimizes trauma for a child.

Where To Report

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline
1-800-392-3738 or 1-844-CAN-TELL
Online at dss.mo.gov/cd/can.htm
Child is in immediate danger, call 911.



If a child discloses to you that they have been abused, stay calm and listen.

Only ask open ended questions, like, "Tell me more". Avoid digging for details and do not have multiple officers question the child's story. This re-traumatizes the child and damages the investigation and/or prosecution.

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.