

ALL ADULTS:

REPORT ABUSE IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE

Kids are counting on adults to protect them.

This resource is for **all adults, including family members, neighbors and friends.**

In times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. However, reports of child abuse and neglect in Missouri have declined dramatically. As children begin to come out of isolation and re-engage with their communities, adults need to know what to do if they observe abuse or if a child discloses abuse. Adults are #Essential4Kids!

Trust your Gut If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe – report.

Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services You are not making an accusation when you report, you are requesting professional help for a child and their family.

You May Be the Only Person to Act If you reasonably suspect a child is unsafe - report. In making a report, you don't need proof. You need reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion means that you have witnessed abuse, become aware of, or believe a child is unsafe.

Anonymous reports are accepted from anyone. Anyone making a report in good faith is protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action. Your identity is held confidential and will not be revealed.

Where To Report

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline
1-800-392-3738 or 1-844-CAN-TELL

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.



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."* 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.

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.

Appears emotionally unattached to caregiver and others.

Sexual Abuse

Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior for their age.

Child attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment.

Witnessing an adult inappropriately touching or saying sexual things to/with a child; exposing a child to pornography.

Neglect

Caregiver is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

Caregiver's physical/mental health prevents them from providing for child's basic needs.

Child begs or steals food and/or has severe consistent poor hygiene.

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.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.