

Illinois Child Abuse Reporting Guidelines

Protecting children is a serious responsibility shared by everyone. Some people are required by law (mandated reporters) to report abuse or neglect when they reasonably suspect a child has been a victim. Anyone can and should call the DCFS Hotline when they reasonably suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, even if they aren't a mandated reporter. The Hotline worker will determine if the information given by the reporter meets the legal requirements to start an investigation. The reporter's identity is confidential and will not be shared with others. If you call in good faith, the law protects you from civil liability.

What is needed for a child abuse or neglect investigation?

The possible victim is a child under the age of 18.

The person suspected to have committed the abuse/neglect must be a parent or their romantic partner; an immediate relative or someone living in their home; a caretaker (babysitter); or any person responsible for the child's welfare (healthcare provider, teacher, coach, youth program volunteer, etc.).

Mistreatment of the child can result in injury or put the child at serious risk of injury. Abuse can be physical (bruises, broken bones, head injury), sexual (fondling, exploitation, incest) or emotional.

Neglect is when a caregiver does not provide adequate food, clothing shelter, supervision, medical care or basic needs of the child.

What Information do I need to give to the Hotline?

The child's name, age and address.

Information about the suspected abuse or neglect. Where it occurred and when it occurred.

Names of suspected perpetrators, if known, and relationship to the child (relative, teacher, coach, etc.).

Other information that may be helpful, such as about the siblings or other family members, or other individuals who may know about the situation.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-25-ABUSE

1-800-252-2873

1-800-358-5117 (TTY)

The Hotline operates 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

Reporters should be prepared to provide phone numbers where they may be reached throughout the day in case the Hotline must call back for more information.

Online reporting is available.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/safekids/reporting/Pages/index.aspx>