

# **Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

## **Participant's Guide**



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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**  
MYFLFAMILIES.COM

# Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Participant's Guide

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<http://fcim-dcf.fcim.org/dcf/dcfcourseresources/#CAAN>

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# Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

## Module 1: Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect

### Overview

This module will define terms associated with child abuse and neglect and provide an overview of the risk factors and effects associated with child abuse and neglect.

### Module Goal

Participants will be able to identify the signs, symptoms, and indicators of child abuse and neglect.

### Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this module, you will be able to:

- Identify and define terms associated with child abuse and neglect
- Identify common physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect
- Explain causes and risk factors of child abuse and neglect
- Identify effects of child abuse and neglect





## Module 1 Introduction

It is important for you to learn about this subject. Child abuse and neglect can occur in \_\_\_\_\_ of any socioeconomic \_\_\_\_\_. It can also occur out of the home, including in child care programs. It is more prevalent than you may think, and you may be the only person in a position to intervene. You not only have a \_\_\_\_\_ obligation to intervene, but you have an \_\_\_\_\_ obligation to report it.

For more information about child abuse and neglect, you can call the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence at 1-800-500-1119 or the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence at 1-888-956-7273 to be connected to a local hotline.



### Activity: Childhelp USA's® Pre-Quiz

1. Three children die as a result of child abuse in the home in the United States each
  - a. Year
  - b. Day
  - c. Week
  - d. Month
  
2. How many people report child abuse when faced with an actual situation?
  - a. 3/4
  - b. 1/2
  - c. 1/3
  
3. What is the single, leading cause of death for children ages four and younger?
  - a. Drowning
  - b. Motor vehicle accidents
  - c. Child abuse and neglect
  - d. Choking on food
  - e. Residential fires
  - f. Suffocation
  - g. Falls
  
4. On average, child abuse is reported somewhere in the United States every
  - a. 10 seconds
  - b. 20 minutes
  - c. Hour

5. Strangers pose the greatest risk of sexual abuse to children.
- a. True
  - b. False
6. Child molesters get their sexual gratification only from children.
- a. True
  - b. False
7. The average age that child molesters first attack a child is when the molesters are:
- a. In their early 20s
  - b. Middle-aged
  - c. In their teens
8. Which of the following actions can help stop child abuse and neglect?
- a. Helping a stressed-out parent by baby-sitting, making a meal for their family, or lending an understanding ear
  - b. Learning the signs and symptoms of child abuse so you can recognize them when you see the "red flags"
  - c. Reporting known or suspected child abuse to the police or local child protective services agency
  - d. All of the above

Identify and highlight one answer on the quiz that surprised you the most.



### **Activity: Learning Definitions**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ – Any person under the age of 18 years.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ – Any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual abuse, injury, or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ – The mistreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare that results in injury or harm to the child.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ – Sexual contact or interaction between a child and an adult or older child. Includes indecent exposure, fondling, touching sexual organs, forcible rape, sodomy, exploitation, and showing pornography.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ – A form of emotional abuse that involves excessive yelling, shaming, belittling and/or teasing of a child.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ – Situations of known or suspected child abuse or neglect that occur at a private school, public or private child care center, residential home, institution, facility, or agency where the alleged perpetrator is an employee or any other person at such institution responsible for the child's care.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ – Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, or needed supervision.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ – Failure to provide support, acceptance, attention, warmth, supervision and normal living experiences for a child to the extent that the child is impaired in ability to function normally in performance and behavior.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ – Anything to a child's health or welfare that can occur when any person:
  - a. inflicts, or allows to be inflicted, upon the child physical, mental, or emotional injury;
  - b. commits, or allows to be committed, sexual battery, or lewd or lascivious acts against a child;
  - c. allows, encourages, or forces the sexual exploitation of a child;
  - d. exploits a child, or allows a child to be exploited;
  - e. abandons the child;
  - f. neglects the child;
  - g. exposes a child to a controlled substance or alcohol;
  - h. uses mechanical devices, unreasonable restraints, or extended periods of isolation to control a child;
  - i. engages in violent behavior that demonstrates a wanton disregard for the presence of a child and could reasonably result in serious injury to the child;
  - j. negligently fails to protect a child in his or her care from inflicted physical, mental, or sexual injury caused by the acts of another;
  - k. has allowed a child's sibling to die as a result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.
  - l. makes the child unavailable for the purpose of impeding or avoiding a protective investigation unless the court determines that the parent, legal custodian, or caregiver was fleeing from a situation involving domestic violence.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ – When a child is left alone in a situation beyond their physical and emotional development level or when a child is left in the care of someone who does not provide adequate supervision.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ – When the child is exposed to structurally unsafe housing, exposed wiring, inadequate or unsafe heating, or unsanitary housing conditions.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ – When a child suffers, or is likely to suffer, from physical or emotional health conditions resulting from inadequate clothing, improper hygiene, and uncleanness.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ – When the caretaker has regularly failed to provide, or make available, adequate food to the child, which can cause malnutrition over a long period of time.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ – When a medical or dental condition is left untreated, possibly resulting in serious or long-term harm to the child.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ – When the parents deny satisfying or fulfilling relationships, thus avoiding most interactions as a method of avoiding rejection and failure. The lack of support, emotional care, or love can cause the infant and/or child's weight to fall below the fifth percentile for age.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ – When education is not enforced by the parents, thereby contributing to the child's absence from school – leading to the lack of education and leading to truancy.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ – Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll free telephone number 800-962-2873.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ – Exemption from civil or criminal charges resulting from reporting "in good faith."





## Types of Child Abuse

This is an example of \_\_\_\_\_ abuse:

For the 3rd time this week, Kevin got mud all over his clothes while he was playing outside. This made Kevin's mother, Shelby, mad. She thought that putting him in hot bath water would punish him for the dirty clothes. He cried about taking a bath and cried even more when he was put in the bathtub with scalding hot water. Shelby kept her hand on Kevin's shoulder. Every time he tried to get out of the water, Shelby would push him down. Shelby didn't notice the scald marks until after the bath was over.

**Examples:**

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Another type of abuse is \_\_\_\_\_.

Casey has been at your facility for 3 years. He has been known to lie on several occasions. He comes from a family that has a wonderful reputation in the community. One day, Casey is crying. When you ask him what is wrong, he tells you that his dad made him take his clothes off and then he took a lot of pictures of him. Casey said Dad told him not to tell anyone about the pictures. He said Dad told him this was their special secret.

**Examples:**

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A third type of abuse is \_\_\_\_\_.

Latoya is a quiet and shy child. Lately, she has been talking even less. One day, she was in the housekeeping area when a cup was accidentally broken by one of the children. Latoya started crying. When you asked what was wrong, she told you it reminded her of when she broke her dad's favorite cup one time. She said now her dad tells her every morning, when she is eating breakfast, that he doesn't want her around anymore because she is bad and is too much trouble. When you ask if Dad hurts her, she says no.

**Examples:**

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
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 **Key Point:** There are three types of child abuse: physical, sexual, and emotional.



## Shaken Baby Syndrome

What can shaking a baby or young child cause?

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What can you do to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome?

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How can you cope with a crying baby or child?

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## Child Neglect

Dad works a 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. job. Mom works from 11:00 p.m. until 7 a.m. as a nursing assistant. This schedule allows one parent to always be home to care for the children so they do not have to pay for child care. One day, Dad has to work a double shift. He will not be home until midnight. It is 10:00 p.m. and close to time for Mom to leave. She feels they can't afford to pay someone to watch her 2- and 6-year-old children, even for a short time. She decides that the children can stay alone since they are asleep and Dad will be home in a couple of hours.

### Examples of Neglect:

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Failure to provide support, acceptance, attention, warmth, supervision, and normal living experiences for a child is considered child neglect. Withholding these things can cause a child to not function normally in performance and behavior.

\_\_\_\_\_ can be an outcome of emotional abuse or emotional neglect. A lack of holding, hugging, rocking, singing, touching, and loving that occurs during infancy and early childhood can cause an infant's or child's weight to drop to below the fifth percentile.

If an adult intentionally withholds food, shelter or any other necessity as a punishment, then it is abuse; but if things needed to survive are withheld by circumstance or lack of awareness, care, or education, then it is an act of neglect. Both abuse and neglect are crimes and violations of children's human rights.

It is important for your program to offer parents information on resources in your community in an effort to prevent neglect before it occurs. Be proactive – work with your families from the first day they enter your program.

 **Key Point:** Failure to provide support, acceptance, attention, warmth, supervision, and normal living experiences for a child is considered neglect.



## Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

### Physical Abuse Indicators

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unexplained bruises or welts</li><li>• Unexplained burns</li><li>• Unexplained broken bones</li><li>• Unexplained lacerations or abrasions</li><li>• Domestic violence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wary of adult contact</li><li>• Apprehensive when other children cry</li><li>• Behavioral extremes: aggressive or withdrawn</li><li>• Frightened of parents</li><li>• Afraid to go home</li><li>• Reports injury by parents</li><li>• Shows anxiety about normal activities (napping, eating, etc.)</li><li>• Easily startled</li><li>• Wearing long sleeves/pants in warm weather</li><li>• Banging, hitting, or threatening play</li></ul>

### Physical Neglect Indicators

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, over/under dressed for the climate</li><li>• Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities over long periods of time</li><li>• Unattended physical problems or medical needs (anemia, urinary infections, diarrhea, malnutrition)</li><li>• Abandonment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begs for, steals food</li><li>• Extended stays at school (early arrival, late departure)</li><li>• Constant fatigue, listlessness, or falling asleep in class</li><li>• Alcohol or drug abuse</li><li>• Delinquency (thefts)</li><li>• States there is no caregiver</li></ul>

## Emotional Abuse or Neglect Indicators

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and language disorders</li> <li>• Lags in physical development</li> <li>• Failure to thrive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking, etc.)</li> <li>• Conduct disorders (antisocial, destructive)</li> <li>• Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)</li> <li>• Psychoneurotic reactions (hysteria, obsession, compulsion, phobias)</li> <li>• Behavior extremes (compliant/passive, aggressive/demanding)</li> <li>• Overly-adaptive behavior (inappropriate adult, inappropriate infant)</li> <li>• Developmental lags (mental, emotional)</li> <li>• Self-destructive behavior or attempted suicide</li> </ul>

## Sexual Abuse Indicators

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty in walking/sitting</li> <li>• Torn, shredded, stained, or bloody underclothing</li> <li>• Pain or itching in genital area</li> <li>• Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas, or mouth or throat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawal, fantasy, or infantile behavior</li> <li>• Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual behavior, or knowledge</li> <li>• Poor peer relationships</li> <li>• Delinquency or running away</li> <li>• Reports sexual assault by caregiver</li> </ul>



**Key Point:** There are observable physical and behavioral indicators associated with abuse and neglect.



## Interaction with Child and Family

What are some examples of things that might be observed or shared with you or talked about that could help you recognize the signs of abuse or neglect?

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There are experts that are trained to question the child. Caregivers should listen to and observe the child, but not interview them.


### Do:

- Believe what the child tells you
- Be someone the child trusts and respects
- Conduct the conversation in a quiet, private, and non-threatening place
- Gather enough information to make an informed report to the Florida Abuse Hotline
- Reassure the child that he/she has done nothing wrong
- Allow the child to tell you what happened in a free and open manner
- Let the child set the pace and use language that is comfortable to them
- Ask the child to clarify unfamiliar terms

### Don't:

- Ask leading questions or suggest answers to the child
- Ask for details (This is the job of the investigator)
- Suggest that the story may not be true
- Show body language such as shock, anger, or surprise while the child is talking
- Communicate feeling of shock, anger, or surprise
- Force child to remove clothing to show signs of physical abuse
- Leave the child alone with a stranger
- Ask "why" questions

Children are not always eager to talk about an abusive incident. Sometimes, they will disclose information through their activities. Examples would be a child spanking a doll with an object, doing sexually inappropriate things with a doll, role-playing a parent using abusive or demeaning language, or doing other things that a young child would not likely have imagined. Abusive incidents may also show up in a child's artwork or stories they share with others.

 **Key Point:** Interaction with children and families provides information that may further help the caregiver in recognizing possible cases of abuse and/or neglect.

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**Activity: Applying Your Knowledge**

Scenario 1:

You are a caregiver for four-year-olds. You have known one of the boys in your class and his family for about six months. The mother is divorced and is raising the boy and his older sister by herself. The father sees the children once in a while. The mother dates and leaves the boy at night with his older sister to supervise him. Lately, the boy has been coming to school with various cuts and bruises. Each time you ask his mother about the marks, she explains what has happened. Today, the child came to your program with what looks like cigarette burns on his right leg. He also has a fresh bruise on his arm. When you try to ask him about it, he will not talk to you. He seems very withdrawn.

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Scenario 2:

You are a caregiver and one day one of your 3-year-olds comes to your program limping. You ask the child what happened and if you could see what is hurting her. She says, "Mommy won't take me to the doctor, she said I was bad." and the child starts to cry.

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Scenario 3:

A child in your program has had a recent personality change. He has become very quiet and rarely speaks to adults. One day, he complains of his arm hurting. He rolls up his sleeve and shows you what appears to be finger marks from a very hard slap. You ask him how it happened and he tells you that his father slapped him. You ask the child where else he has been slapped and he shows you his back with many old marks.

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Scenario 4:

You are the cook in a child care facility. There is a very sweet child who has a slight smile on his face each time you smile at him. You notice that for a number of weeks now, he has brought nothing but a small butter and bread sandwich for lunch. He has no fruit or other food in his lunch. He is extremely thin and you observe that he never buys milk that is sold by the school, but instead has only water in his cup. The mother, who always comes to the facility with fancy clothes and jewelry, has consistently ignored your inquiries into providing a more balanced meal for the child. The mother claims that he is a picky eater. You have offered him food occasionally when the school has prepared too much. He seems grateful when you do this and gobbles the food down.

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Scenario 5:

The parents of one of the children in your program both work for an airline. In this family, both do a lot of traveling but usually travel at different times. Unavoidably, they needed to be out of town at the same time and the children were cared for as usual by a woman they hired about four months ago. The child came to your class very angry and would not play with her best friend. You noticed that on a hot summer day when she would normally wear a short-sleeved sundress, the child was wearing long pants and a long sleeved blouse.

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Scenario 6:

When you change an infant's diaper, you notice a yellow discharge and unhealthy odor. You report your observations to the parent that evening. The parent says it was nothing. You notice the same symptoms the rest of the week, write an incident report, and suggest to the parent that a doctor look at the infant. The parent replies that money is not available and it will probably clear up soon. The following week, you notice the same symptoms and report it to your Director, who insists on medical treatment. Nothing happens this week.

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Scenario 7:

A coworker at your child care program just went through a divorce and is having financial problems. Over the last week, you heard her yelling and several of the children crying. You approached her about it and she said that the children were just misbehaving. Today, a little boy from her class approaches you in tears and said that she made him stand in the dark closet for a long time.

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## What is Human Trafficking?

### Examples of Human Trafficking – Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC):

- **Renegade/Survival Sex:** The victim may “broker” exchanges for a sexual act independently.
- **Pimp Trafficking:** There is a third party “brokering” the exchange of the sexual act for a tangible item, typically money.
- **Gang Trafficking:** The trafficking is a source of generating money for the gang, and a gang member is involved in the trafficking of the victim.
- **Labor trafficking:** Labor trafficking occurs in many different situations, including domestic servitude; construction; landscaping; the sex industry; factories and sweatshops; migrant farm work; service industries such as nursing homes, cleaning services, bars, and restaurants; and the food industry.
- **Familial trafficking:** Trafficking involving a person who is being forced to engage in commercial sex or forced labor by a family member or caregiver.

### Indicators of Human Trafficking

- Youth’s acknowledgement of being trafficked
- Report of human trafficking by parent/guardian, law enforcement, medical care or service provider, teacher, child protective services, and/or juvenile probation officer
- History of running away four or more times, or getting kicked out of the home four or more times (the definition of running away or getting kicked out of the home includes times the youth did not voluntarily return within 24 hours and also includes incidents not reported by or to law enforcement)
- Child is 12 or older and has a history of allegations of sexual abuse (with or without findings); or a disclosure of sexual abuse by the child
- Current incident or history of inappropriate sexual behaviors (not limited to prostitution)
- Child is known to associate with confirmed or suspected CSEC youth
- Child is recovered from a runaway episode in a hotel or known area of prostitution
- Child has no knowledge about the community in which he/she is located
- Child is not allowed or is unable to speak for himself/herself and may be extremely fearful
- Child has no personal items or possessions (including identity documents if foreign born, which is common in cases of labor trafficking)
- Child appears to have material items that he or she cannot afford, such as cell phones, expensive clothing, tablets, etc.
- Child shows signs of being groomed in a manner the child cannot afford and cannot justify how the items and/or services were paid for, for example getting hair done, nails done, new clothing, etc.
- Suspicious tattoos or other signs of branding, for instance tattoos of the trafficker’s names, dollar signs, diamonds, stars, etc.
- Child associates with and/or has relationships with age-inappropriate friends, boyfriends, and/or girlfriends
- Child has inappropriate, sexually suggestive activity on social media websites and/or chat apps

All of these indicators, with the exceptions of running away and a history of sexual abuse, are independent of each other.



**Key Point:** Child care professionals need to be aware of the indicators of human trafficking in order to protect the safety of children.



## Risk Factors of Child Abuse and Neglect

Now, we are going to look at some interactions between the child, parent, and their environment that can place children at risk for maltreatment. We will look at these risk factors in three categories:

- Child risk factors
- Parental and family risk factors
- Social and environmental risk factors

### Child Risk Factors

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### Parental/Family Risk Factors

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### Social/Environmental Risk Factors

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**Key Point:** There are child, family, and environmental factors that place children at risk for abuse and/or neglect.



# Misconceptions



## Activity: Misconceptions and Realities

Determine if each of the following is a fact or a myth. For each statement, circle "F" for Fact and "M" for Myth.

Fact or Myth	Statement	Notes
F M	Children lie about being abused.	
F M	Many victims of child abuse do not display physical signs.	
F M	In most cases of sexual abuse, the perpetrator is a stranger.	
F M	Abuse and neglect are seen among people of all ages, genders, ethnic groups, family structures, races, socioeconomic statuses, and sexual orientations.	
F M	It is hard to predict where sexual abuse may occur because there are no known risk factors.	
F M	All child sexual abuse is physical.	
F M	One of the signs that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse is the display of sexual behaviors that are not age appropriate.	
F M	Most children who have been abused face life-long mental health issues and many physical conditions have been linked to such trauma.	
F M	If a child discloses sexual abuse, the best thing to do is to get details for the investigators.	



## Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect

The effects of child abuse and neglect can be serious and permanently affect children's

\_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_ development. Recent scientific studies of the brain reveal that the first years of a child's life are critical to development. A child must receive adequate

\_\_\_\_\_ to ensure that nerve cells in the brain develop fully.

Negative experiences, like \_\_\_\_\_ or

\_\_\_\_\_, are extremely detrimental in early years. The effects of abuse on a child can begin before a mother even gives birth.

### The Impact of Trauma, Abuse, and Neglect:

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## Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Child, Family, Caregiver, and Society

Experiences throughout childhood can impair mental abilities and may cause a child to respond with aggression or violence to stressful or frustrating situations. The physical and emotional consequences of child abuse and neglect affect the child, family, caregiver, community, and society.

### Physical and Emotional Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Children:

- Academic problems: school learning problems, underachievement, truancy
- Behavior problems: passive or withdrawn, active or aggressive, self-destructive, drug use, impulsivity
- Sexual problems: sexually inappropriate behavior, promiscuity or withdrawal
- Confusion about identity: low self-esteem, poor self-image
- Anxiety, loss of trust, depression
- Medical/dental problems: fertility problems, chronic pain, stress disorders

### Physical and Emotional Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Family:

- Mistrust: family isolates itself
- Ineffective: problems get bigger
- Violent
- Non-supportive
- Dysfunctional
- Poor role model

### Physical and Emotional Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Caregivers:

- Challenging to deal with disruptive behavior in children
- Not trained to deal with psychological issues
- Heartbreaking to worry about the children you know
- Stress reactions
- Confusion/apprehension about what to do
- Fear of reporting

### Physical and Emotional Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Society:

- Poor employability skills
- Poor social interaction skills
- Social withdrawal (leading to isolation)
- Repeated patterns of abuse/neglect
- Culture continues to accept violence as a part of life
- Higher medical and social service costs
- Lost human potential
- Increased crime rate



**Key Point:** The effects of child abuse and neglect can be serious and permanent to a child's cognitive, physical, and emotional development.





## Strengthening Factors to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

For more information, go to: [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/protectfactors/). The website contains information on child abuse and neglect. The site also contains a resource book to help implement best practices in your child care program.

Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. These attributes serve as buffers, helping parents to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

Research has shown that the following protective factors are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect:

### Nurturing and attachment

- A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behavior and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.
- Research shows that babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of healthy development. A child's relationship with a consistent, caring adult in the early years is associated later in life with better academic grades, healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, and an increased ability to cope with stress.

### Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development

- There is extensive research linking healthy child development to effective parenting. Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.

### Parental resilience

- Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, or domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness—may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

### Social connections

- Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Research has shown that parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.

### Concrete supports for parents

- Many factors affect a family's ability to care for their children. Families who can meet their own basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation—and who know how to access essential services such as childcare, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs—are better able to ensure the safety and well-being of their children.
- Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Providing concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.



## Working with Abused and Neglected Children

Working with abused or neglected children can be challenging. Before you can effectively help a child or parent, you need to know several things about their behavior:

- Children who have been abused may not \_\_\_\_\_ other people. Their experiences have shown them that getting close to people and trusting them causes discomfort and pain.
- These children need a close one-to-one relationship to develop and grow normally. They often \_\_\_\_\_ warmth, hugs, and affection at first.
- They may be \_\_\_\_\_ in one or more areas of their development (motor, speech, and behavior).
- Their behavior may be at one of \_\_\_\_\_ extremes: difficult to manage, destructive, and irritable; or unusually shy and anxious to please.
- Abused and neglected children have very poor \_\_\_\_\_. Important adults in their lives have had unrealistic expectations for these children, and they often are led to believe that they caused their own abuse.
- \_\_\_\_\_ of abused children may feel that you are a threat. They may be hostile and ungrateful toward you since they feel jealous, in competition, inadequate, or afraid you will learn their secrets and report them.

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**Key Point:** It takes understanding, patience, and skills to work with abused and neglected children.

A recommended book for you to read is *Death from Child Abuse... and No One Heard* by Eve Krupinski and Dana Weikel. It is the powerful true story of a young Florida girl's death from abuse at the hands of her mother's boyfriend with the knowledge of the mother.

# Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

## Module 2: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

### Overview

This module will explain the role of the caregiver in reporting child abuse and neglect. It explains the legal responsibility, according to Florida law, of child caregivers in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect, as well as provides community resources.

### Module Goal

Participants will understand their role in reporting child abuse and neglect.

### Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this module, you will be able to:

- Explain the role of the caregiver in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect
- Follow the requirements of reporting suspected child abuse and neglect according to Florida law
- Identify community resources that provide support for abused and the abuser





## Module 2 The History of Child Abuse Reporting

The first child abuse case was reported in 1873.

Mary-Allen was 9 years old when a church worker, Mrs. Etta Wheeler, who had been asked to visit the family, found Mary-Allen shackled to her bed, grossly malnourished, scarred, and badly beaten. Mrs. Wheeler was so appalled by what she saw that she went to the authorities to report this horrifying child abuse. The authorities turned her away because they classified her treatment as a family matter, where parents had complete authority; therefore, law enforcement did not get involved. But, Mrs. Wheeler refused to take no for an answer. She petitioned the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Sadly, animals were protected but children were not.

Mrs. Wheeler appealed to the ASPCA that children were members of the animal kingdom and must therefore be protected. It was on these grounds that the ASPCA finally intervened. Mary-Allen was removed from her abusive home and placed in foster care, where she thrived. She went on to marry, have 2 daughters, and live to the age of 92.

Mary-Allen is considered the very first child abuse case in North America. Her case led to the founding in 1874 of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children with child protection as its primary mandate. The society promoted the fact that parents do not have complete authority over their children.



## Who is Mandated to Report Abuse?

Section 39.201, Florida Statutes (F.S.) states \_\_\_\_\_ Floridians must report any child abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect they \_\_\_\_\_. Failure to report is a third degree felony in the State of Florida.

Persons in the following professions must provide their names when filing a report:

- a. Physician, osteopathic physician, medical examiner, chiropractic physician, nurse, or hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons;
- b. Health or mental health professional other than one listed in subparagraph a;
- c. Practitioner who relies solely on spiritual means for healing;
- d. School teacher or other school official or personnel;
- e. Social worker, day care center worker, or other professional child care, foster care, residential, or institutional worker;
- f. Law enforcement officer; or
- g. Judge.

In other words, all \_\_\_\_\_ professionals must provide their \_\_\_\_\_ when reporting suspicions of child abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect.


Pursuant to section 39.202, F.S., the names of reporters are held confidential except to specific individuals involved in carrying out the investigation.

Annually, a statement must be signed by child care professionals acknowledging their understanding of the laws for reporting suspicions of child abuse and neglect.

### Additional Resources

For more information about reporting child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, go to:  
[www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline](http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline).

To get the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Statement online go to:  
<http://ccrain.fl-dcf.org/documents/6/96.pdf#page=1> (for English) or  
<http://ccrain.fl-dcf.org/documents/6/452.pdf#page=1> (for Spanish)






### Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Requirements

All child care personnel are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment to the Florida Abuse Hotline in accordance with § 39.201 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.).

- Child care personnel must be alert to the physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect. "Child Abuse or Neglect" is defined in § 39.201, F.S., as "harm or threatened harm" to a child's health (mental or physical) or welfare by the acts or omissions of a parent, adult household member, other person responsible for the child's welfare, or for purposes of reporting requirements by any person.
  - Categories include:
    - Physical Abuse or Neglect (i.e., unexplained bruises, hunger, lack of supervision...)
    - Emotional Abuse or Neglect (i.e., impairment in the ability to function, depression...)
    - Sexual Abuse (i.e., withdrawal, excessive crying, physical symptoms...)
- Reports must be made immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System by:
  - Telephone at 1-800-66-ABUSE (1-800-362-2873), or
  - Fax at 1-800-814-3004, or
  - Online at <http://www.fl-dcf.org/abusehotline>.
- Failure to perform duties of a mandatory reporter pursuant to § 39.201, F.S., constitutes a violation of the standards in ss. 402.301-310, F.S., and is a felony of the third degree. **Remember**, it is each child care personnel's responsibility to report suspected abuse and/or neglect.
- All reports are confidential. However, persons who are mandated reporters (child care personnel) are required to give their names when making a report.
- It is important to give as much identifying and factual information as possible when making a report.
- Any person, when acting in good faith, is immune from liability in accordance with § 39.203(1)(a), F.S.
- For more information about child abuse and neglect, visit the Department's website at [www.fl-dcf.org/abusehotline](http://www.fl-dcf.org/abusehotline) and select "Training Requirements." The Department offers a 4-hour, *Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* course for child care providers. This course is an overview of the various types of abuse and neglect indicators that may be observed, the legal responsibility of mandatory reporters, and the proper procedure for reporting abuse and neglect, as required by ss. 402.305(2) and 602.313(1), F.S. The course is offered both online and instructor-led throughout Florida.

This statement is to verify that on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, I, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
 Read and understood the information and my mandated reporting requirements.  
 Signature of Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

- 
**Key Point:** Every adult in Florida is required by law to report ANY suspected abuse or neglect.
- 
**Key Point:** All child care professionals must provide their names when reporting suspicions of child abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect; everyone else can make an anonymous report, if they prefer.
- 
**Key Point:** Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a third degree felony in the State of Florida.



## Trauma-Informed Care

Indicators of trauma in children ages birth to 5:

- Attachment behaviors toward caretakers
- Sleep disturbances, particularly nightmares
- Immobility
- Does not explore
- Regression in behavior
- Failure to Thrive
- Thumb sucking, whining, and loss of acquired speech
- Prolonged uncontrollable crying
- Hyper-vigilance
- Biting, kicking, tantrums, unprovoked aggression

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**Tips for helping children ages birth to 5 after a traumatic event:**

- Give these very young children a lot of verbal support
- Take a deep breath before holding or picking them up and focus on them, not the trauma
- Get down to their eye level and speak in a calm, gentle voice using words they can understand
- Tell them that you care for them and will continue to take care of them
- Do everything you can to make them feel safe



## Module 1 Summary

Here is a summary of key points for **Module 1: Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect**.

There are three types of child abuse: physical, sexual, and emotional.

Failure to provide support, acceptance, attention, warmth, supervision, and normal living experiences for a child is considered neglect.

There are observable physical and behavioral indicators associated with abuse and neglect.

Interaction with children and families provides information that may further help the caregiver in recognizing possible cases of abuse and/or neglect.

There are child, family, and environmental factors that place children at risk for abuse and/or neglect.

The effects of child abuse and neglect can be serious and permanent to a child's cognitive, physical, and emotional development.

It takes understanding, patience, and skills to work with abused and neglected children.



## Module 1 Conclusion

You have achieved this module's learning objectives if you can:

- Identify and define terms associated with child abuse and neglect
- Identify common physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect
- Explain causes and risk factors of child abuse and neglect
- Identify effects of child abuse and neglect





## How to Make a Report

Online at: <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us> **OR**  
**1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**

The Florida Abuse Hotline was established in 1971. Florida was one of the first states in the nation to have a toll-free hotline capable of receiving reports of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect around the clock and immediately initiating an investigation anywhere in the state. A report of suspected child abuse and neglect states that a child may have been abused, abandoned, or neglected. The Florida Abuse Hotline operates under Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes.

As a Floridian and a child care provider it is your duty and your \_\_\_\_\_  
according to Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes to report any \_\_\_\_\_  
case of child abuse or neglect.

You don't have to prove anything. That is the investigator's job.

There are 4 ways to make a report:

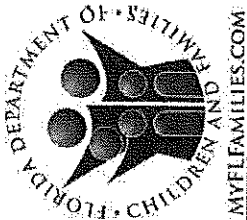
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The FAX Report Form can also be found at the DCF website: [www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/abuse/docs/faxreport.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/abuse/docs/faxreport.pdf)



**FLORIDA ABUSE HOTLINE Fax Transmittal Form**  
**To Report Abuse/Abandonment/Neglect/Exploitation**  
**Fax Number: 1-800-914-0004**

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT REPORTING ABUSE, READ THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BROCHURE ON REPORTING ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS.

MYFLFAMILIES.COM

**REPORTER INFORMATION**

This information is required for mandatory reporters. Refer to Chapters 39 and 415, Florida Statutes.

Your Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: Street # \_\_\_\_\_ Street Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Would you like to be notified as to whether or not an abuse report was accepted based on the information provided?  Yes  No  
 If yes, please indicate your preferred method of notification.  Telephone  U. S. Mail

**VICTIM INFORMATION**

If the victim is a child, list other children in the home. If the victim is an adult, describe disability and how he/she is impaired in the ability to care for or protect self in the DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT section on next page.

ADDRESS where the victim is currently located:

Street # \_\_\_\_\_ Street Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	DOB	SEX	RACE	SSN	IS THIS PERSON A VICTIM?
(1)						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
(2)						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
(3)						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
(4)						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
(5)						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR ALLEGED ABUSE, NEGLECT, ABANDONMENT OR EXPLOITATION**

NAME	DOB	SEX	RACE	SSN	RELATIONSHIP TO VICTIM
(1)					
(2)					
(3)					



The Florida Abuse Hotline Fax Transmittal Form is used when you need to fax a report to the hotline. This form can also be used \_\_\_\_\_ to making a phone call to review the information needed in a report. However, do not delay contacting the abuse hotline, even if you don't have all of the information on this form.

Be sure to note the section for **Who?**, **What?**, **When?**, and **Why?** information. This is information you will need to have ready prior to making a report.


Please note: If the situation is an emergency and the child is in danger, call 9-1-1 and then follow up with a call to the abuse hotline.

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 **Key Point:** The four ways abuse and neglect reports can be made to the Florida Abuse Hotline are: online, telephone, Florida Relay/TTY, and fax.



**Activity: Practice Filling Out the Report Sheet**

Read the scenario and then complete the Florida Abuse Hotline Fax Transmittal Form.

**Scenario:** One of the children in your program, John, arrives one morning with a black eye. He is normally cheerful and animated, but today he is acting more quiet than usual. When questioned in the morning, he tells you that he fell off his bike the previous day. Later in the day, you hear him telling a co-worker that he fell down some stairs. John lives with his father, Ben, and an older brother, Steve, who is in high school and plays on the football team. John's father is a mason and works very long hours; he is often in a hurry when he drops John off in the morning and picks him up in the afternoon.



## Confidentiality and Immunity

There are laws that protect caregivers who report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Although you must provide your name when filing a report, the law provides caregivers confidentiality and protection from being sued.

Section 39.202, F.S. states that the name of the person reporting the child abuse or neglect shall not be released to any person other than employees of the department responsible for child protective services, early intervention and prevention services, Healthy Start services, licensing agents, and domestic violence services. A reporter's name can be released to these individuals without his or her written consent. Other than that, this law ensures that confidentiality will be maintained for the person reporting the suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

Section 39.203, F.S. states "any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in any act authorized or required by Chapter 39, or reporting in good faith any instance of child abuse to any law enforcement agency, shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise result by reason of such action."

The law ensures that civil or criminal immunity (protection from being sued) will be given to a person reporting a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Section 39.203, F.S. states this protection will be given to any person, official, or institution participating in good faith. Good faith means the individual making the report suspects a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected.

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**Key Point:** Florida law ensures that confidentiality will be maintained for child care workers reporting suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.



# How to Handle Accusations of Child Abuse and Neglect



## Activity: Sharing with a Partner

Find a partner to work with. With your partner, create a list of things to do if you are accused of abuse or neglect. Share the items on the list that are in place at your work site. Next, discuss the items that you feel can be improved upon at your work site. Take notes in the space provided.

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- Don't become \_\_\_\_\_.
- Cooperate fully and \_\_\_\_\_ with authorities.
- Get statements from colleagues about your \_\_\_\_\_.
- Know the \_\_\_\_\_ related to abuse and neglect.
- Talk to a \_\_\_\_\_ to ensure your rights and those of family members.
- Remember that \_\_\_\_\_ you have put in place, such as your discipline procedures and incident reports, will help you.
- Work with your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to handle the impact of the accusation on the school, other parents, and children.



## Agencies/Resources

There are places to go within the community whose many functions provide support and preventative services to children who are victims of abuse or neglect, and their families. They also can help prevent the abuse from beginning or recurring. These resources also provide education to the community about child maltreatment issues.

### Child Protective Services

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### The Department of Children and Families

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### Law Enforcement and State Attorney's Offices

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### Medical Programs and Community Agencies

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Legal Agencies

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Communities

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Individuals

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**Key Point:** There are local community resources that provide help for abused children, their families, and abusers.





**Activity: Do's and Don'ts for Child Caregivers**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Remain ignorant about the situation.		
Lose your temper with an abusive parent; it only serves to put him or her on the defensive.		
Ensure the child care program has a resource area for families, which includes community organizations or services that can provide assistance.		
Wait to suggest needed resources to families who are at risk.		
Be observant and look for the signs of child abuse that might be seen in children and parents.		
Make excuses for child abuse or ignore the warning signs.		
Realize that abusive parents are in need of help and most often can be successfully treated, but only by medical and mental health professionals.		
Assume that all abusive parents are bad people and cannot be changed.		
Take action when you suspect or observe abuse or neglect, or the signs of possible abuse or neglect.		
Be influenced by gossip or unverified information.		
Report suspected child abuse, abandonment, and neglect to the Florida Abuse Hotline.		
Remember that the law states that if you report in good faith, you cannot be prosecuted.		
Be afraid to become involved.		
Know that you may be the one to save a child's life.		

(Source: Adapted from *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Milliken Publishing Company, 1980)

There is no single approach to preventing or intervening in cases of child abuse and neglect. In Florida, the continuum of prevention and intervention services fall into many categories, such as:

- Prenatal support for expectant parents
- Postnatal education and support
- In-home education and support
- Early and regular educational, medical, and psychological screening
- Medical and psychological services
- Child care
- Self-help groups
- Parent education and training
- Child safety training
- Family crisis and intervention support
- Treatment and intervention services
- Community organizations
- Public information
- Legal action

For more information, contact your local Department of Children and Families' office or other local resources discussed earlier, or visit the Department of Children and Families' child abuse website at: [www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/)



**Key Point:** The Department of Children and Families' child abuse website ([www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/)) is a good source of information.



**Video: The Promise of Prevention**

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**Activity: Reflection**

Think about and reflect on things you have heard or discussed in this module. Write down one thing you were unaware of before starting this module and one thing you are thinking about differently or planning to do differently.

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## Module 2 Summary

Here is a summary of key points for **Module 2: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**.

Every adult in Florida is required by law to report ANY suspected abuse or neglect.

All child care professionals must provide their names when reporting suspicions of child abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect; everyone else can make an anonymous report, if they prefer.

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a third degree felony in the State of Florida.

The four ways abuse and neglect reports can be made to the Florida Abuse Hotline are: online, telephone, Florida Relay/TTY, and fax.

Florida law ensures that confidentiality will be maintained for child care workers reporting suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

There are local community resources that provide help for abused children, their families, and abusers.

The Department of Children and Families' child abuse website ([www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/)) is a good source of information.



## Module 2 Conclusion

You have achieved this module's learning objectives if you can:

- Explain the role of the caregiver in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect
- Follow the requirements of reporting suspected child abuse and neglect according to Florida law
- Identify community resources that provide support for abused and the abuser