



Procedures to Follow if You Suspect Abuse or Neglect

While reporting possible child abuse or neglect can be a very sensitive issue, you only need to suspect abuse or neglect to report the case. You are not expected to be an investigator since that is the job of the Child Protective Service agency. If you suspect possible abuse or neglect, there are specific steps you must take in your role as an educator. If you suspect possible abuse or neglect, follow the following steps:

1.) Gather all the information you can about the suspected incident or incidents and write it up in factual and behavioral terminology (this means no opinions, interpretations, assumptions or guesses, just factual observations or information i.e. The child said.... I directly observed... There were black and blue marks on his/her legs.)

2.) Notify your direct administrator (usually a building principal) of the information you have that caused you to suspect abuse or neglect. Here again verbalize only facts. At this point the administrator will usually call the Child Abuse Hotline or assign someone to call. If you are assigned to call keep the following in mind:

- Make sure you call the mandated reporters hotline. Many states have two lines, one for the public to report cases and one for mandated reporters. The numbers can be found in the phone book or by calling 800-555-1212 and asking for the State Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline for Mandated Reporters since most of these hotlines are 800 numbers.
- Once you have a counselor on the phone immediately ask for his/her name and note the time and date of your call.
- Inform the counselor that you believe you have a suspected case of abuse or neglect. He/she will ask you some basic questions for their records and then ask you what evidence you have to suspect that something has taken place.
- Again, report only facts and direct observations. At this point the counselor may indicate that it is either reportable or not a reportable case.
- If the case is reportable, the counselor will ask you more questions so be prepared with the following information:
 - the child's full name
 - the address of the child
 - the child's birth date
 - the parent's/guardian's first and last names (if different)
 - the child's telephone number
 - the parent's/guardian's work number if known
 - other siblings in the house and their ages
 - the grade of the child
 - the school and school district of the child

- number and nature of any previous reports
- 3.)** After he/she gathers all the information they may assign a case number so be prepared to jot this down. They will inform you that they will be passing the case on to a local case worker who will be in touch with the school.
- 4.)** Ask the counselor if he/she feels that the child can go home or if the school should retain him/her until the case worker appears. The school has this right if the child's health or safety will be compromised in any way by returning home after school. Many times the case worker will come immediately if it is deemed a serious case and will speak with the child before the end of the school day. A home visit is usually made within 24 hours or less if the case is considered serious.
- 5.)** The school nurse under the direction of the building administrator may photograph any obvious marks or contusions for evidence.
- 6.)** Once the case is reported you will probable receive a Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment form from the Department of Social Services. The school must fill this out and return it within 24 hours. Here again, the person who made the original contact with the state counselor may be the one who fills out the form. An example of this type of form appears at the end of this chapter. Keep in mind that this is a legal requirement.
- 7.)** In some instances, the counselor may indicate that a case does not sound reportable as abuse or neglect. They may indicate that it does represent poor judgment on the part of parents but does not constitute abuse or neglect. At this point you can ask why and ask their advice for the next step. However, if it is not reportable, write your administrator a letter indicating the time, date and the name of the counselor to which you spoke, and the reasons why the case was not accepted as reportable. Your legal responsibilities are now covered. However, your moral responsibilities have just begun.
- 8.)** If the administrator listens to the facts and does not see it as a reportable case, you should ask the reasons why and suggest that the case be presented to the Child Abuse counselor for their input. However, if the administrator continues to indicate that he/she does not feel it needs to go any further inform him/her that as a mandated reporter you feel a responsibility to call the Child Abuse Hotline and ask the counselor on call if he/she feels it is a reportable case. If an administrator does not want to report a case and you go along , and it is later determined that abuse or neglect was taking place, you may find yourself in very serious trouble. It is not acceptable to use the excuse "I told my administrator". Remember you are a mandated reporter and directly responsible for actions taken or not taken.

D - Example Report Form of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment

Subjects of Report

List all children in household, adults responsible for household and alleged perpetrators

	Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Aliases	Sex	Birth date	Ethnic	Suspect or
Alleged Perpetrator					M or F	or age	Code	Relationship
1-								
2-								
3-								
4-								
5-								
6-								
7-								

If known, list addresses and telephone numbers:

Basis of Suspicions

Alleged consequences or evidence of abuse or maltreatment. Place the above line numbers next to the appropriate area. If all children, write "ALL".

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Withdrawal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Neglect | <input type="checkbox"/> Child's Drug/Alcohol |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abandonment | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Medical Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Malnutrition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DOA/Fatality | <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to Thrive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fractures | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Neglect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lacerations, Bruises, Welts | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Food, Clothing, Shelter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive Corporal Punishment | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Injuries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, Specify _____ | |

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State reason for suspicion. If possible, include type and extent of the child's injury, abuse or if known, give time and date of maltreatment in each case. Further, if known, list any evidence of prior injuries, abuse or alleged incident, maltreatment to the child or any siblings. Also list suspicions of any behavior on the part of the parent(s) which may contribute to the problem.

Month: _____ Date: _____ Year: _____ Time: _____ AM: ____ PM: ____

Sources for the Report

Person making this report

Source of this report if different

Name: _____ Telephone: _____ Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Agency/Institution: _____ Agency / Institution: _____

Relationship (mark X for Reporter and * for Source)

Medical Examiner/Coroner Physician Hospital Staff Law Enforcement

Neighbor Relative Social Services Public Health

Mental Health School Staff Other (specify) _____

This Section For Physicians Only

Medical Diagnosis on Child:

Signature of Physician Who Examined or Treated Child:

Telephone Number:

Hospitalization Required: None Under One Week 1-2 Weeks Over 2 Weeks

Actions taken or about to be taken:

Medical Examination Hospitalization Notified D.A. Notified Medical Examiner

Notified Coroner Returned Home Removal/Keeping X-Ray

Photographs

Signature of Person Making This Report: _____ Title: _____

Date Submitted: _____