



## INFORMATION ON REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

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- **Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it.\***
- *If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency.*
- You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

**What is Abuse?** Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child

**What is Neglect?** Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

### How do I make a report?

1. Call the abuse and neglect hotline at **1-800-252-5400**.
2. When you make a report, be specific. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries or incidents you have observed, including dates and time of day and keep this information secured.
3. Reports should be made as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. It is important for the investigators to be able to see the physical signs.
4. Give the agency person any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.
5. Please provide at least the following information in your report.
  - Name, age, and address of the child
  - Brief description of the child
  - Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
  - Parents names and names of siblings in the home

**Will the person know I've reported him or her?** Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. *Your identity is kept confidential.*

**Finally, err on the side of caution.** If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, *make the report.* If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you if the signs you have observed are abuse.

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- Failure to report is a Class B criminal offense, punishable by a \$2,000 fine and/or imprisonment for up to 180 days. Failure to report also could subject you to considerable monetary liability in a civil rights action.

**CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-252-5400**

# Keeping Children Safe



## Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or law enforcement.

Call **1-800-252-5400** to make confidential reports.

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime.

Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.

### Protecting Children

**Shaken Baby Syndrome** is the result of violently shaking young children. Injuries can include brain swelling and damage, subdural hemorrhaging, mental retardation and death.

**NEVER SHAKE A BABY!**

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome**, or SIDS, is the unexplained death of a sleeping baby. Always place infants to sleep on their backs on a firm surface, free from soft items such as quilts, pillows or toys.



### Unsafe Children's Products

Recalls of unsafe consumer products, including children's products, are available. It is easy and free to find out. Just go to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or you may access the recall information at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services web site at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

### Keeping Children Healthy

Protect children from illness and disease:

- Wash your hands and children's hands often.
- Immunize children.
- Keep ill children at home.
- Learn CPR and First Aid.
- Make sure that children drink plenty of water.
- Discuss special-care needs with caregivers.
- Learn more about childhood diabetes, which impairs a body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels, and other medical conditions from your child's health-care provider.



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

\* Texas Family Code, Title 5. The Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship, Subtitle E. Protection of the Child, Chapter 261. Investigation of Report of Child Abuse or Neglect. Subchapter B. Report of Abuse or Neglect; Immunities