

Let the Children come to Me



Parish Program for the Protection of Children

(Recognizing and Responding to suspected Child Abuse and Neglect)

San Felipe de Jesus Parish, Inc.
Nogales, Arizona



This is the Law in Arizona

(ARS 13-3620)



Any person who reasonably believes that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means...shall **immediately report or cause reports to be made** of this information **to a peace officer or to child protective services** in the department of economic security, except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace officer only.

A person who furnishes a report...is **immune from any civil or criminal liability**....unless the person acted with a malice or unless the person has been charged with or is suspected of abusing or neglecting the child or children in question.

A person (Mandatory reporter) who violates this section is guilty of a class 1 misdemeanor, except if the failure to report involves a reportable (sexual) offense, the person is guilty of a **class 6 felony**.

Who has a duty to report?

You have the duty to report if in your job or **ANYWHERE ELSE IN YOUR LIFE** you are responsible for the care, control, or treatment of children.

For example, if you are a CCD teacher, or a volunteer in the youth group of your church, you are obligated to report child abuse and neglect wherever you observe it.



What is Child Abuse & Neglect?

In the State of Arizona Child Abuse & Neglect is divided in four major categories which are reportable:

- 1. Neglect:** failure to provide basic needs (food, shelter, medical care, supervision)
- 2. Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental injury of a child by a parent or caretaker that results from punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting, and burning the child
- 3. Sexual Abuse:** Exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of the adult; includes fondling genitals, penetration, incest, rape, exposure, porn, talking about it, telling child to have sex with another person.
- 4. Emotional Abuse:** parent ridicules, criticizes, shames a child; child is depressed, withdrawn, suicidal, or aggressive as a direct result.

Before You make a Report:

- **DO NOT interview the child.**

it is not up to you to prove the case. Do not pass the child around from one adult to another so everyone can “check” the situation. One of you can ask “What happened?” and “Who did it?” if necessary to reach reasonable belief

- You don't have to be sure abuse occurred, just “**reasonably believe**” based on what you've seen and heard. You need to report second-hand information in addition to situations you come across personally.
- **Remember as much detail as possible** about what you've observed or what a child has told you.

When reporting....

- **Call the CPS Hotline (1-888-SOS-CHILD) and 911 immediately.** If you believe the child will be in danger when he or she leaves your sight, call 911 first and then CPS. The two agencies will work together on cases that might produce criminal charges.
- **Answer the Hotline worker's questions as best as you can.** Provide specific information about the threat or danger the child faces.

“Red Flag” Indicators for Possible Abuse or Neglect

Neglect

- Consistent lack of supervision, report that no caretaker is at home, abandonment
- Chronic untreated head lice
- Unattended medical needs
- Consistent hunger, steals food, begs from classmates
- Poor hygiene, inappropriate dress for the season
- Regularly fatigued, listless, falls asleep in class



“Red Flag” Indicators for Possible Abuse or Neglect

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises (in various stages of healing), welts, human bite marks, bald spots
- Unexplained burns, especially cigarette burns or immersion burns (glove-like)
- Unexplained fractures, lacerations, or abrasions
- Wears clothing inappropriate to weather to cover body
- Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably
- Self-destructive
- Withdrawn and aggressive behavioral extremes
- Arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home
- Chronic runaway (adolescents)
- Uncomfortable with physical contact

“Red Flag” Indicators for Possible Abuse or Neglect

Sexual Abuse

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing, bruises or bleeding in genitalia
- Pain or itching in genital area, difficulty walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex
- Venereal Disease, frequent urinary tract infections
- Significant weight change and/or wears baggy clothing to shield self
- Excessive seductiveness

“Red Flag” Indicators for Possible Abuse or Neglect

Sexual Abuse

- Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence, withdrawal, chronic depression
- Threatened by physical contact or closeness; hysteria or lack of any emotional engagement
- Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings
- Sudden school difficulties, peer problems, lack of involvement
- Suicide attempts (specially in adolescents)

“Red Flag” Indicators for Possible Abuse or Neglect

Emotional Maltreatment

- Noticeably withdrawn, depressed (suicidal), anxious, or aggressive (or passive and aggressive behavioral extremes)
- Speech disorder, developmentally delayed
- Delayed physical development, failure to thrive, habit disorders (sucking, rocking)
- Antisocial, destructive, delinquent behavior, substance abuse (especially adolescents)

Above “red flag” material adapted from “Guidelines for Schools-to-Help Protect Abused and Neglected Children” by the American Association for Protecting Children, Inc.

NOTICE

Conducting your own investigation may taint the official investigation and make it difficult for CPS to determine whether the child is safe and make it impossible for Law Enforcement to bring a perpetrator to justice.

Things to Remember

The investigation process needs to be left up to CPS and law enforcement personnel.



They will determine:

- 1. Can the child go home?**
- 2. Does the child have someone who will protect him or her?**
- 3. Who is the perpetrator?**

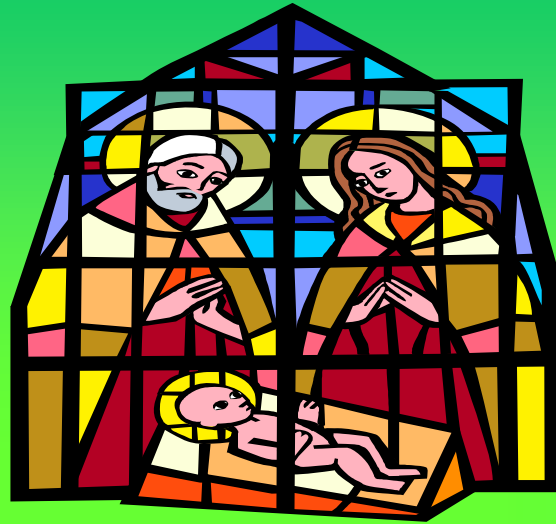
Key points to remember

1. CPS investigates cases of abuse and neglect that occur within the framework of the family.
2. Cases involving abuse by someone outside the home will be handled by law enforcement and may not involve CPS unless there is a child protection issue
3. Law enforcement may be involved in every investigation of child abuse.
4. CPS is responsible for ensuring the protection of the child and will coordinate case investigation with law enforcement.



If you have a question about whether or not you should report something, call the CPS Hotline at
1-888-SOS-CHILD.





Questions &
Answers
Do's and Don'ts



Q: Should we call the parents?

I've heard they have the right to know that someone will be talking to their child.

A: No. It is the job of investigative agencies to contact the parents. Contacting the parents as the investigation is just beginning is considered “improper” (Arizona Attorney General Op I04-003) and can lead to unforeseen consequences depending on the relationship between the parent and the alleged perpetrator. Since most abuse and all neglect starts in the family, you don't want to tip off the person who is harming the child. It can be vitally important to a child's safety that you do NOT inform parents about a report even if you know them very well.

Q: Does CPS or Law Enforcement have the power to interview children (for example, at a school, camp, or child care setting) without consent of the parents?

**A: Yes, CPS and Law Enforcement have the power to interview the child without parent consent and without parents present.
(Arizona Attorney General Op I04-003)**

Q: Can I insist on being present in the interview to protect the child or the interests of the parish?

A: No.

If you are needed, the investigating official will invite you to participate. Law and Attorney General opinions give the investigating authorities the right to conduct the interview out of your presence.

Q: What if someone else tells me that a child is being neglected or abused? Shouldn't they report it? Should I check it out before I report it?

A. You are responsible for reporting second and third-hand information if it concerns a child's safety. You should not investigate or check out the person's story before reporting it. While you can encourage the other person, if an adult, to make the report, you are still responsible for making it.

Q: Can anyone bring charges against me or sue me for making a report of abuse or neglect to the authorities?

A: No. You are completely protected against criminal or civil action if the report is made in good faith based on reasonable suspicion. A false report made maliciously can result in charges against you.

Not reporting child abuse can result in charges against you as well.

CPS will not reveal your name to the family.

Q. Have I fulfilled my duty to report if I tell the priest, catechist, or secretary about the situation?

A. NO. Everyone who believes neglect or abuse is occurring has the right to report. Telling a supervisor doesn't take this responsibility off your shoulders. And a supervisor does not have the right to tell you not to make a report you believe needs to be made. It's often a good idea for the employee, volunteer, and the supervisor to work together on making the report. If you are making a report, make sure to tell the compliance representative or the priest so that person is prepared to greet CPS and/or Law Enforcement investigators.

Action Plan

When you reasonably believe
Abuse or Neglect has occurred

Call CPS Hotline
1-888-SOS-CHILD

Call
911

Share Information with
Responding Officers/Investigators

Debrief with Staff and Investigators

Provide Appropriate Support for Child



**HIS LOVE IS ALWAYS WITH YOU
HIS PROMISES ARE TRUE
NO MATTER WHAT THE TRIBULATION**

