



## Guide to Reporting Suspected Abuse

### Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect of a Child

If an adult suspects a child is being abused or harmed, it must be reported by the person voicing the concern. Texas law mandates that all adults report their suspicions to the child abuse hotline.

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

Children's Advocacy Center of Collin County recommends reporting abuse to Child Protective Services or local law enforcement prior to contacting the child's family. At the beginning of a child abuse investigation, it is not always clear who is safe for the child to be around. It is important that authorities make the first contact with the alleged offender. Therefore, if the alleged offender is a member of the victim's immediate family; please do not notify the family about the disclosure or report of abuse.

If the concern relates to possible abuse by a non-family member, first report the abuse. Then contact the family and let them know it is your duty to report your suspicions.

### Who Must Report?

- Texas law requires anyone with knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect to report it to the appropriate authorities. This mandatory reporting applies to all individuals and is not limited to teachers or health care professionals.
- The mandatory reporting law even extends to individuals whose personal communications may be otherwise privileged, such as attorneys, clergy members and health care professionals.
- Individuals who are licensed or certified by the state or who work for an agency or facility licensed or certified by the state and have contact with children as a result of their normal duties, such as teachers, nurses, doctors, and day-care employees, must report the abuse or neglect within 48 hours.
- A person acting in **GOOD FAITH** who reports or assists in the investigation of a report of child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability.
- Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a Class A Misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment of up to one year and/or a fine of up to \$4,000.
- Merely reporting the incident to your supervisor or manager is insufficient.

### How to Report

- Call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400
- If the child is in immediate danger, CALL 9-1-1
- Reports of suspected abuse may also be filed using the secure reporting website at [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).