

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

DANVILLE FIRST BAPTIST SAFE CHURCH

DANVILLE, PA 17821

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Child abuse is a difficult topic to address and even more uncomfortable to report. In the event that you find yourself in this unfortunate circumstance please take a few minutes to speak with the LORD about the people involved and your own feelings.

This booklet contains information that should help you be prepared. Our Pastors and/or the Child Safe Church Co-Ordinator will help you find a private spot to prepare and to make the call. Please keep all information private and do not discuss it with others. We will assist you and walk with you through the process. Should you have further need to talk about what you have experienced please contact a member of the Pastoral Staff.

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Child Abuse Information: <http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/resources/reportabuse/>
Childline: 1-800-932-0313 (See Page 4)

How do I know whether I have "reasonable cause to suspect" that a child is a victim of abuse?

Reasonable cause to suspect is a determination you make, based on your knowledge of circumstances, observations, familiarity with the individuals, and feelings about the incident.

Knowledge of circumstances would include:

- Who
- What
- How
- When
- Observations would include:
 - Indicators of abuse or "red flags" present
 - Behavior and demeanor of the child
 - Behavior and demeanor of the adult.
- Are there any other behaviors or other observations important to notice?
- Familiarity would include the knowledge you have about:
 - The individuals
 - The family situation
 - Relevant history or similar prior incidents
- Think about your feelings and personal biases and consider how they influence your conclusions and actions.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse, according to the CPSL, means intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

- Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
- Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
- Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
- Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
- Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
- Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 1466, 22 U.S.C. § 7102).
- Child abuse also includes certain acts in which the act itself constitutes abuse without any resulting injury or condition. These recent acts include any of the following:

Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.

Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.

Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.

Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.

Interfering with the breathing of a child.

Causing a child to be present during the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.

Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the parent knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or III sexual offender or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.

"Recent" is defined as an abusive act within two years from the date the report is made to ChildLine. Sexual abuse, serious mental injury, serious physical neglect and deaths have no time limit.

Are you a mandated reporter?

The following adults are considered mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse:

- A person licensed or certified to practice in any health-related field under the jurisdiction of the Department of State.
- A medical examiner, coroner or funeral director.
- An employee of a health care facility or provider licensed by the Department of Health, who is engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of individuals.
- A school employee.
- An employee of a child-care service who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.

**** An individual paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, is a person responsible for the child's welfare or has direct contact with children. (This includes most FBC Volunteers.)***

- An employee of a social services agency who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- A peace officer or law enforcement official.
- An emergency medical services provider certified by the Department of Health.
- An employee of a public library who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above, who has direct contact with children in the course of employment.
- An independent contractor who has direct contact with children.
- An attorney affiliated with an agency, institution, organization or other entity, including a school or regularly established religious organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or control of children.
- A foster parent.
- An adult family member who is a person responsible for the child's welfare and provides services to a child in a family living home, community home for individuals with an intellectual disability or host home for children which are subject to supervision or licensure by the department under Articles IX and X of the Public Welfare Code.

When must a mandated reporter make a report?

A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
- * The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child. This applies to FBC Child/Youth Ministries)
- A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.

An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

How does a mandated reporter make a report if they suspect child abuse?

In case of an emergency dial 911 or call your local police and then contact the Child Abuse Hotline, ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313.

This toll free number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with caseworkers waiting to assist you

Mandated reporters must make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to:

ChildLine electronically at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis.

Using the website takes you to the Child Welfare Portal which requires that you know your password (created when you signed up for clearances.)

OR

by calling ChildLine 1-800-932-0313.

- Each report is handled by a trained specialist who determine the most appropriate course of action.
- Actions include forwarding the report to:
 - County children and youth agencies or the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Regional Offices for investigation or assessment;
 - Law enforcement officials for investigation; and Department of Human Services program offices for review and possible licensing action.

What to expect when you make a report.

- The law requires that the mandated reporter identify themselves and where they can be reached. In addition to having documentation that the report was made, this information is also helpful so that if clarification on the situation or additional information is needed, the children and youth caseworker can contact the mandated reporter.
- Be prepared with the following information: (See the report worksheet provided.) Provide as much information as possible.
- Name and physical description of the child
- Age or approximate age range of the child
- Name, home address, and telephone number of legal guardian or parent of the child
- Name or physical description of suspected child abuse perpetrator
- Home address and telephone number of suspected child abuse perpetrator
- Suspected perpetrator's relationship to the child
- Description of the suspected injury to the child
- Where the incident took place
- Any concern for the child's immediate safety
- Your relationship to the child
- Your contact information, although you may report anonymously if you are a permissive reporter

For questions about this procedure, please contact the church office at 570-275-1511.

NOTES

Suspected Child Abuse Worksheet

Child's Name: _____ Age/Age Range: _____

Physical Description: _____

Parent of Legal Guardian Information:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Suspected Perpetrator Information:

Name or physical description: _____

Phone Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Suspected Perpetrator's Relationship to the child: _____

Description of suspected injury to child: _____

Location of suspected incident: _____

Any concern for the child's immediate safety: _____

Reporter's relationship to the child; _____

Reporter's contact information: _____

A copy of this report should be turned into the Safe Church Office. You may keep a copy for yourself. If you like.