

What is Child Abuse?

Under Alabama law, it is “harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare which can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse; sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.”

Signs to Look For:

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained bruises, marks, or cuts
- Marks in the shape of an object
- Fear of adults
- Destructiveness towards self or others
- Poor social skills
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Clothing that may be inappropriate

Sexual Abuse

- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Unusual interest in or inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Over-compliance
- Pain during urination
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent vomiting
- Wetting pants

Emotional Abuse

- Depression or withdrawal
- Lack of emotion
- Lack of interest
- Speech, sleep, or eating disorders
- Repetitive actions, such as rocking, sucking, or biting
- Increased emotional needs

Neglect

- Clothing that’s dirty, torn, poorly fitting, or inappropriate for the weather
- Sleepiness
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Inappropriate responsibility for younger siblings
- Frequent tardiness or absences from school
- Apparent lack of supervision

Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

The Children’s Trust Fund

www.ctf.alabama.gov

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 **Prevent Child Abuse**
Alabama



Alabama’s Mandatory Reporting Law

*Learning your legal obligations
to reporting the signs of
suspected child abuse*



Who are Mandatory Reporters?

Any person whose profession brings them in contact with children on a daily basis is legally obligated to report signs of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Mandatory Reporters are:

- Employees at hospitals, clinics, & sanitariums
- Social Workers
- Child Care Employees
- Clergy
- School Teachers & Officials
- Public and Private K-12 employees
- Employees of public and private insitutions of postsecondary and higher education
- Physical Therapists
- Dentists
- Peace Officers
- Law Enforcement
- Mental Health Proffessionals
- Pharmicists
- Nurses
- Doctors, Physicians, Surgeons, & Medical Examiners
- Podiatrists, Chiropractors, Optometrists, Osteopaths, & Coroners

If you suspect child abuse, what should you do?

- Trust your instincts
- Take notes
- Look at the facts
- Make a report using form: DHR-FCS-1593, which is available at your county DHR office or available online.

www.dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Protective_Services/WrittenReport_MandatoryReporters.aspx

**Mandatory Reporting Online
Training, Forms, & More:
<https://aldhr.remote-learner.net>**



Some people are required, by law, to report suspected abuse or neglect, however, everyone is encouraged to make a report if he or she suspects a child is being abused or neglected.

What is your liability?

All persons reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (whether required by law or not) are presumed to be acting in good faith. Alabama law provides immunity from liability for actions by mandatory reporters.

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-9

Is your job protected?

“A public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect ... shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor”

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-3(g)

Penalties for Failure to Report:

“Any person who shall knowingly fail to make the report required by this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than 6 months’ imprisonment or a fine not more than \$500.00.”

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-13