

## **What important information do I need?**

### **Referrals**

When referring known or suspected cases of child abuse/neglect to DYFS, provide the following information when possible:

- the name of the child;
- the age and grade of the child;
- the name and address of the child's guardians and other household members;
- the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, or maltreatment;
- a description of the child's condition, including any available information concerning current or previous injuries, abuse or maltreatment; and
- any other pertinent information that the referent believes may be of assistance to DYFS or law enforcement
- **CALL IMMEDIATELY!!**

**1-877-NJ ABUSE  
(1-877-652-2873)**

## **What is the role of DYFS?**

- in New Jersey, the **Office of Children's Services, Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)** is the state agency that receives and investigates allegation of child abuse and neglect.
- the mission of **DYFS** is to protect vulnerable children from abuse, neglect or exploitation; support family preservation; and prevent family violence and disruption

## **What is the role of law enforcement?**

- to investigate and prosecute those referrals of child abuse and neglect which may warrant criminal charges
- to conduct sensitive and age-appropriate interviews of children and other involved parties

## **What is the role of school?**

- to promote proper reporting to **DYFS** and law enforcement
- to cooperate with **DYFS** and law enforcement in a coordinated, multidisciplinary response

**Department of Education  
Monmouth County Office**

## **School Employee's Desk Reference on Child Abuse and Neglect**



**Prepared in collaboration  
with Monmouth County  
Prosecutor's Office  
and  
Division of Youth &  
Family Services**

**1-877-NJ ABUSE  
(1-877-652-2873)**

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## What are my obligations to report child abuse/neglect?

1. Under New Jersey law, any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected in any environment (e.g. home, institution) shall immediately report to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). 1-877 NJ ABUSE. (N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10)

2. Penalty for failure to report is a disorderly persons offense punishable by up to six months incarceration. (N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.14)

3. A person who acts in "good faith" in reporting child abuse and neglect is immune from civil or criminal prosecution. (N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.13)

4. Under the Department of Education guidelines, schools have an obligation to notify law enforcement without unreasonable delay. (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25) Schools may designate a staff member to make law enforcement referrals, but this does not relieve any person of making the referral to DYFS.

### WHAT ARE COMMON SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Physical indicators of abuse may include reported or unexplained:

- Bruises/welts
- Burns
- Lacerations/abrasions
- Fractures

### Indicators of sexual abuse may include, among others:

- Complaints regarding genital areas
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unusual knowledge about or preoccupation with sex (seduction)
- Pregnancy
- Alcohol/drug use
- Excessive delinquency

### Indicators of neglect may include, among others:

- Consistent hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate dress
- Lack of supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Excessive absences
- **Indicators of emotional maltreatment may include, among others:**
- Aggressive or withdrawn behavior (inhibition of play)
- Unusual fears or compulsive behaviors
- Running away
- Sudden change in mood or behavior
- Anti-social behavior

### How do I report suspected child abuse/neglect?

- You must report to DYFS at the toll free 24/7 Child Abuse Hotline 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)
- The school district is obligated to report to law enforcement

### What happens when I report?

DYFS assigns a time frame for response by the Investigator:

- Immediate (within 2 hours)
- Non-Immediate (within 24 hours)
- Child Welfare Assessment (within 72 hours)
- If the report does not meet the criteria of any specific allegation of abuse or neglect, the child welfare assessment may lead to referral for appropriate community resources. The acceptance of services is voluntary.

DYFS assigns the matter to:

- A local DYFS office to investigate, or
- Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit: ((IAIU) for incidents that occur in foster homes, schools, residential centers, and daycare centers.

DYFS will coordinate their response with local law enforcement where appropriate:

- May interview staff in the course of their investigation
- Law enforcement has the authority to remove a student without prior parental/guardian notification