

Procedures and Information for Reporting
Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Center Point ISD
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Fast Facts*

- Every 35 seconds a child is confirmed as abused or neglected.
- Every 6 hours a child is killed by abuse or neglect.
- In one long-term study as many as 80% of young adults who were abused met the diagnostic criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder at age 21. (Teicher, 2000)
- In another study 25.2% of foster care alumni had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD in the previous 12 months – twice the rate of U.S. war veterans. (Casey)
- Studies have found abused and neglected children to be at least 25% more likely to experience problems such as: delinquency; teen pregnancy; low academic achievement; drug use; mental health problems. (Kelley, Thornberry & Smith 1997)
- A National Institute of Justice study indicated being abused or neglected as a child increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59%; increased the adult criminal behavior 28%; and increased the committing of violent crime by 30%. (Widom & Maxfield, 2001)
- Research consistently reflects an increased likelihood that abused and neglected children will smoke cigarettes, abuse alcohol, or take illicit drugs. According to a report from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, as many as two-thirds of people in drug treatment programs reported being abused as children. (Swan, 1998)
- CPS receives 19.3% of their reports of suspected abuse or neglect from school employees.

Warning Signs*

Symptoms of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse include: Signs of malnutrition; Poor hygiene; Unattended physical or medical problems; Unexplained bruises, burns or welts; Child appears frightened of a parent or caregiver; Pain, bleeding, redness or swelling in genital area; Age-inappropriate knowledge of sex; Extremes in behavior, ranging from overly aggressive to overly passive.

Responding to Abuse*

- Do not promise you will keep a secret.
- Do not promise protection you cannot deliver.
- Do not talk bad about the perpetrator.
- If you have an outcry it is important to listen and not cut the child's disclosure short.

If You Suspect Abuse...*

- Remain calm and reassure the child.
- Don't ask suggestive questions (Did your dad...?).
- Don't try to investigate.
- Don't confront the abuser.

- Don't have preconceived assumptions.
- DO report your reasonable suspicion.

How to Contact Texas Department of Family and Protective Services*

By telephone: 1-800-252-5400

By internet: <https://reportabuse.ws>

Reporting in School Settings*

- The person who heard the outcry or has the most knowledge of what is happening with the child should make the report. Additional individuals may be listed as collateral sources in the report.
- Alternate numbers are very helpful in planning investigation.

Failure to Report*

Failure to report suspected abuse is a Class B misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$2,000.

* Source: Federico Carranza, Program Director for Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Texas Education Code

Sec. 38.004. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING AND PROGRAMS. (a) The agency shall develop a policy governing the child abuse reports required by Chapter 261, Family Code, of school districts and their employees. The policy must provide for cooperation with law enforcement child abuse investigations without the consent of the child's parents if necessary, including investigations by the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Each school district shall adopt the policy.

(a-1) The agency shall:

(1) maintain on the agency Internet website a list of links to websites that provide information regarding the prevention of child abuse; and

(2) develop and periodically update a training program on prevention of child abuse that a school district may use for staff development.

(b) Each school district shall provide child abuse antivictimization programs in elementary and secondary schools.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 260, Sec. 1, eff. May 30, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 561, Sec. 1, eff. June 16, 2007.

Texas Family Code

SUBCHAPTER B. REPORT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT; IMMUNITIES

Sec. 261.101. PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT; TIME TO REPORT. (a) A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.

(b) If a professional has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected, or that a child is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code, and the professional has cause to believe that the child has been abused as defined by Section 261.001 or 261.401, the professional shall make a report not later than the 48th hour after the hour the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected or is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code. A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. In this subsection, "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, employees of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

(c) The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, a mental health professional, and an employee of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services.

(d) Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only:

(1) as provided by Section 261.201; or

(2) to a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 20, Sec. 1, eff. April 20, 1995. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 751, Sec. 87, eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 162, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 575, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1022, Sec. 65, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 62, Sec. 6.29, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1150, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1390, Sec. 21, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1420, Sec. 5.003, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 949, Sec. 27, eff. September 1, 2005.