



This material provides mandated reporters with an overview of their obligations and some basic information about the New York State Child Protective Services system.

Who Are Mandated Reporters?

New York State recognizes that certain professionals are specially equipped to perform the important role of mandated reporter of child abuse or maltreatment. Those professionals include:

* Physician	* Resident	* Social services worker	* Employees of a health home, or health home care management agency contracting with a health home, who are expected to have regular and substantial contact with children
* Registered physician's assistant	* Intern	* Employee of a publicly funded emergency shelter for families with children	
* Surgeon	* Psychologist	* Director of a - children's overnight camp, - summer day camp or - traveling summer day camp	
* Medical examiner	* Registered nurse		* Employees who provide home and community-based services under a Social Security Act §1115 demonstration project, who are expected to have regular and substantial contact with children
* Coroner	* Social worker	* Peace officer	
* Dentist	* Emergency medical technician		* Police officer
* Dental hygienist	* Christian science practitioner	* District attorney or assistant district attorney	
* Osteopath	* School official, including (but not limited to): - teacher - guidance counselor - psychologist - social worker - nurse - administrator or other school personnel required to hold a teaching or administrative license or certificate - full- or part-time compensated school employee required to hold a temporary coaching license or professional coaching certificate		* Day care center worker
* Optometrist		* School-age child care worker	
* Chiropractor		* Provider of family or group family day care	* Athletic trainer (effective 12/2025)
* Podiatrist		* Employee or volunteer in a residential care facility for children	
* Licensed creative arts therapist		* Any other child care or foster care worker	* Any other law enforcement official
* Licensed marriage and family therapist		* Mental health professional	
* Licensed mental health counselor		* Licensed behavior analysts	
* Licensed psychoanalyst		* Alcoholism counselor	
* Certified behavior analyst assistants		* All persons credentialed by the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services	

The entire current list can be found in Article 6, Title 6, and section 413 of the New York Social Services Law. The website can be accessed online through the New York State Legislature's website (<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menuf.cgi>). Click on Laws of New York to access Social Services Law.

When Am I Mandated to Report?

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when they are presented with a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment in a situation where a child, parent, or other person legally responsible for the child is before the mandated reporter when the mandated reporter is acting in their official or professional capacity. "Other person legally responsible" refers to a guardian, caretaker, or other person 18 years of age or older who is responsible for the care of the child.

Mandated reporters who are social services workers have expanded reporting requirements. Social services workers are required to report when, in their official or professional role, they are presented with a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment where any person is before the mandated reporter and the mandated reporter is acting in their official or professional capacity.

It is important to remember that if you are not legally mandated to report a family, you can still help support a family by referring them to community-based resources and services.

What Is a Professional Role?

The individuals listed above are operating in their professional role and are therefore legally mandated to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment whenever they are practicing their profession. For example, a doctor who is examining a child in their practice and has a reasonable suspicion that the child is experiencing abuse MUST report their concern. In contrast, a doctor who witnesses child abuse when riding their bike while off-duty is not legally mandated to report that abuse but may choose to report. The mandated reporter's legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment ceases when the mandated reporter stops practicing their profession.

Reasonable Cause to Suspect

Reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment means that, based on your factual observations, professional training and experience, you have a suspicion that a parent or other person legally responsible for a child is responsible for harming that child or placing that child in imminent danger of harm. Your suspicion can be as simple as distrusting an explanation for an injury.



What Is Abuse and Maltreatment?

Abuse:

Abuse encompasses the most serious injuries and/or risk of serious injuries to children by their caregivers. An abused child is one whose parent or other person legally responsible for their care inflicts serious physical injury upon the child, creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or commits a sex offense against the child. Abuse also includes situations where a parent or other person legally responsible knowingly allows someone else to inflict such harm on a child.

Maltreatment (Includes Neglect):

Maltreatment means that a child's physical, mental, or emotional condition has been impaired, or placed in imminent danger of impairment, by the failure of the child's parent or other person legally responsible to exercise a minimum degree of care by:

- * failing to provide sufficient food, clothing, shelter, or education; or
- * failing to provide proper supervision, guardianship, or medical care (*refers to all medical issues, including dental, optometric, or surgical care*); or
- * inflicting excessive corporal punishment, abandoning the child, or misusing alcohol or other drugs to the extent that the child was placed in imminent danger.

Poverty or other financial inability to provide the above is not maltreatment. In situations not involving maltreatment or abuse, mandated reporters are encouraged to refer families to community-based resources and services instead of calling the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) HEARS Family Line (Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure, and Support), 1-888-55HEARS, is a useful means to guide families to obtain support.

Note: *The definitions of abuse and maltreatment are different for children in residential facilities operated or licensed by New York State.*

How Do I Recognize Child Abuse and Maltreatment?

The list that follows contains some common indicators of abuse or maltreatment. This list is not all-inclusive, and some abused or maltreated children may not show any of these symptoms.

Indicators of Physical Abuse Can Include:

- * Injuries to the eyes or both sides of the head or body (*accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body*).
- * Frequent injuries of any kind (*bruises, cuts, and/or burns*), especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause. These may appear in distinctive patterns, such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments.
- * Destructive, aggressive, or disruptive behavior.
- * Passive, withdrawn, or emotionless behavior.
- * Fear of going home or fear of parent(s) or other persons legally responsible for their care.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse Can Include:

- * Symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases.
- * Injury to genital area.
- * Difficulty and/or pain when sitting or walking.
- * Sexually suggestive, inappropriate, or promiscuous behavior or verbalization.
- * Expressing age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual relations.
- * Sexual victimization of other children.

Indicators of Maltreatment Can Include:

- * Obvious malnourishment, listlessness, or fatigue.
- * Stealing or begging for food.
- * Untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention even with the means to do so.
- * Frequent absence from or tardiness to school without reasonable explanation.
- * Child inappropriately left unattended or without supervision.



Where Do I Call to Make a Report?

As soon as you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment, you must report your concerns by telephone to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). The SCR is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to receive your call. The timeliness of your call is vital to the timeliness of intervention by the local department of social services' child protective services (CPS) unit. You are not required to notify the parents or other persons legally responsible either before or after your call to the SCR. In fact, in some cases, alerting the parent may hinder the local CPS investigation and adversely affect its ability to assess the safety of the children.

The telephone numbers to report abuse or maltreatment by a parent, foster parent, day care provider, or other person(s) legally responsible:

Mandated Reporter (800) 635-1522

Public Hotline (800) 342-3720

For Abuse by Institutional Staff:

1-855-373-2122

Oral reports to the SCR from a mandated reporter must be followed within 48 hours by a written report to the local department of social services' CPS unit on form **LDSS-2221A**. A copy of this form and the local mailing address can be obtained by contacting your local department of social services, or by visiting the OCFS website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/>. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Forms," then click "Sort by number," enter the form number in the box, and click "Enter" on your keyboard. You can also search for the form by language.

To contact your local department of social services, visit <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/localdss.asp>

What Happens When I Call the SCR?

There may be times when you have very little information on which to base your suspicion of abuse or maltreatment, but this should not prevent you from calling the SCR if you believe you have reasonable cause. A trained specialist at the SCR will help to determine if the information you are providing can be registered as a report.

The **LDSS-2221A** form, *Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Maltreatment*, can be used to help you organize the identifying or demographic information you have at your disposal. Be sure to ask the SCR specialist for the "Call I.D." assigned to the report you have made.

If the SCR staff does not register the child abuse or maltreatment report, the reason for their decision should be clearly explained to you. You may also request to speak to a supervisor, who can help make determinations in difficult or unusual cases.

Local CPS Role and Responsibilities

When a report is registered at the SCR, the local department of social services is immediately notified for investigation and follow-up. A local CPS caseworker will initiate an investigation within 24 hours.

CPS intervention consists of an evaluation of the child and other children in the home and the development of a plan to meet the needs of the child and family. If there is an immediate threat to the child's life or health, CPS may remove the child from the home.

Upon request, CPS may obtain from the mandated reporter those records that are essential to a full investigation of alleged child abuse and maltreatment for any report made by the mandated reporter. The mandated reporter must determine which records are essential to the full investigation and provide those records to CPS when requested to do so.

Within 60 days of initiating the investigation, CPS will determine whether the report is indicated or unfounded. Mandated reporters may ask to be informed of the outcome of the report.

Law Enforcement Referrals

If a call to the SCR provides information about an immediate threat to a child or a crime committed against a child, but the perpetrator is not a parent or other person legally responsible for the child, the SCR staff will make a Law Enforcement Referral (LER). The relevant information will be recorded and transmitted to the New York State Police Information Network or to the New York City Special Victims Liaison Unit. This is not a CPS report, and local CPS will not be involved.

What Protection or Liability Do I Have?

Source Confidentiality:

The Social Services Law provides confidentiality for mandated reporters and all sources of child abuse and maltreatment reports. OCFS and local CPS units are not permitted to release to the subject of the report any data that would identify the source of a report unless the source has given written permission for them to do so. Information regarding the source of the report may be shared with court officials, police, and district attorneys, but only in certain circumstances.

Immunity From Liability:

If a mandated reporter makes a report with earnest concern for the welfare of a child, they are immune from any criminal or civil liability that might result. This is referred to as making a report in "good faith."



Protection From Retaliatory Personnel Action

Section 413 of the Social Services Law specifies that no medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency shall take any retaliatory personnel action against an employee who made a report to the SCR. Furthermore, no school, school official, child care provider, foster care provider, or mental health facility provider shall impose any conditions, including prior approval or prior notification, upon a member of their staff mandated to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment.

Penalties for Failure to Report

Anyone who is mandated to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment — and fails to do so — could be charged with a Class A misdemeanor and subject to criminal penalties. Further, mandated reporters can be sued in a civil court for monetary damages for any harm caused by the mandated reporter's failure to make a report to the SCR.

Who Provides Training for Mandated Reporters?

The New York State Education Department (SED) Office of the Professions oversees the training requirements for mandated reporters. Some categories — including teachers, many medical professionals, and social workers — need this training as part of their licensing requirement. The training may be included in their formal education program.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is proud to be a certified provider authorized by SED to offer mandated reporter training and has developed a comprehensive curriculum.

OCFS offers a free self-directed online Mandated Reporter Training in Child Abuse and Neglect/Maltreatment Identification. The training covers a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, understanding and identifying adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), identifying implicit bias in the decision-making process, and identifying abuse/neglect in virtual settings. This three-hour web-based online training course is available in English and Spanish 24/7 and is accessible at <https://www.nysmandatedreporter.org/>. There is no cost to the participant.

Special Note: Mandated reporters who require licensure or certification through the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) are required to take mandated reporter training from a trainer who has been approved by NYSED. For more information, please go to <https://www.op.nysed.gov>.

Conclusion

Protecting children and preventing child abuse and maltreatment does not begin or end with reporting. Efforts to prevent child abuse and maltreatment can only be effective when mandated reporters and other concerned citizens work together to improve the safety net in their communities.

In situations where child abuse or neglect is not evident, but a family is in need of help, you can keep children safe and strengthen families by referring them to community-based resources and services. You may call the OCFS HEARS Family Line (Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure, and Support) at 1-888-55HEARS to connect families with services.

To be most effective, your local CPS unit needs strong partnerships within your community. By getting to know the staff in your local CPS unit, you will gain a better understanding of how your local program is structured, and CPS will better understand how to work more effectively with you.

By working together, we can better protect our vulnerable children.

New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Capital View Office Park, 52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, New York 12144

To report child abuse and neglect, call: **1-800-342-3720**
For information on the **Abandoned Infant Protection Act**, call: **1-866-505-SAFE (7233)**

OCFS HEARS Family Line
(Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure, and Support)
1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277)
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Mandated Reporters Hotline for making child abuse and maltreatment reports 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **1-800-635-1522**

The New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs for making reports of institutional abuse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **1-855-373-2122**

To print additional copies of this pamphlet, visit our website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov> and search for this pamphlet under "Publications."

 <https://facebook.com/nysocfs>

 <https://mobile.twitter.com/nysocfs>

https://mobile.twitter.com/nysocfs_espanol