

How Do I Report Suspected Child Abuse?

4-H volunteers are not considered to be childcare custodians, and are not mandated by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. A 4-H volunteer may elect to notify Child Protection Services or local law enforcement agencies directly. In addition, the Cooperative Extension county office should be notified to ensure the safety of other youth involved in 4-H YDP activities.

Encourage the 4-H member to tell the appropriate authorities. You may do this by making sure the child feels that he or she is not to blame about what happened. Tell the child that no one should ask him or her to keep a special secret and that it is okay to talk about what happened with appropriate adults, clergy, school officials or law enforcement personnel.

Avoiding Situations in 4-H.

The University of California encourages 4-H Volunteers to utilize the following practices. They serve a dual purpose of protecting youth members as well as providing volunteers protection from unfounded allegations of abuse.

- Two appointed adult volunteers, or one appointed volunteer plus another adult or staff, (at least one of the two must be a minimum of 21 years of age) are required for all programs, events, activities. Additional leadership may be required based upon the size of the group, its skill level, anticipated environment conditions, and overall degrees of challenge.
- One-on-one activities between adults and youth are not permitted.
- Adult leadership needs to respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing into swimsuits or taking showers at camp and intrude only to the extent that health and safety requires. They also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Contact and Phone Numbers

County Extension Office

Contact: _____

Phone: _____

County Dept. of Social Services

Contact: _____

Phone: _____

Local Law Enforcement Agency

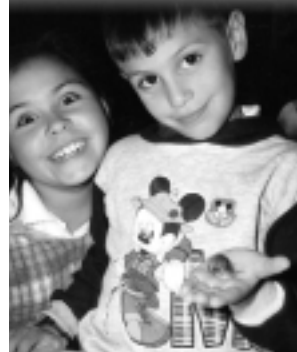
Contact: _____

Phone: _____

Chart adapted from Broadhust, Diane D., "The Educator's Role in the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect," the Users' Manual Series. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Washington, DC, 1979, DREW No. (Ohds 79-30172) and from the Washington State University, Cooperative Extension #C1001



Child Safety Information for 4-H Volunteers



What Is Child Abuse?

Child Abuse and neglect are the injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child by any person who harms the child's health, welfare, and safety.

Physical abuse: Any non-accidental physical injury to a child.

Sexual abuse: Sexual exploitation or other sexual conduct or contact performed to gratify sexual desire.

Neglect: An act or omission that constitutes a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, and/or safety.

Emotional maltreatment: Involves verbal or nonverbal violence toward a child that gives the child the message the child is "not good" and never will be.

Who Must Report

All 4-H YDP Staff are considered to be childcare custodians and are thus required by law to report suspected child abuse. 4-H Volunteers are not considered childcare custodians, and are not required by law to make reports. However, the penal code states that volunteers who supervise children or have direct contact with them are encouraged to obtain training in how to identify and report child abuse.

Any person making a report about child abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of the report, unless it can be proven that a false report made and the volunteer knew the report was false.

How Do I Respond to a Child Who Discloses?

DO

- believe the child and be supportive
- be on the same eye level
- reassure the child that it is okay to tell what happened
- listen to the child
- rephrase important thoughts
- tell the child help is available
- let the child know you can report it
- trust your "gut" feelings
- although, not mandated you may report

DON'T

- promise confidentiality
- panic or express shock
- ask leading or suggestive questions
- make negative comments about alleged perpetrator
- disclose information indiscriminately

How Do I Recognize Child Abuse?

Physical Indicators

Behavioral Indicators

Physical Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unexplained bruises, welts, or burns in various stages of healing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reflecting shape of article (electric cord, belt buckle, bite mark, cigarette burn) – regularly appear after absence or vacation • unexplained fractures, lacerations, or abrasions • injuries inconsistent with information from child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wary of physical contact by adults • behavioral extremes-aggressive or withdrawn • complains of soreness or discomfort • wears clothing inappropriate to weather • reports injury by parents or others • arrives early at meetings or events , and stays late, as if afraid to go home • chronically runs away
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene • consistent lack of supervision, especially for long periods • abandonment • unattended physical problems or medical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begs for, or steals food • constant fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during meetings • substance abuse • delinquency, self-destructive • frequently absent or tardy to meetings needs • reports no caretaker at home
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • torn, stained, or bloody underclothes • difficulty walking or sitting • bruises or bleeding in external genitalia • pain or itching in genital area • venereal disease • pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • withdrawn, chronic depression, poor self esteem • threatened by physical contact or closeness • inappropriate sexual behavior or premature knowledge of sex • reports sexual abuse by caretaker • poor peer relationships • suicide attempts • chronically runs away
Emotional Maltreatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speech disorders • delayed physical development • substance abuse • ulcers, asthma, severe allergies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • habit disorders (sucking, rocking) • antisocial, destructive • neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) • overly adaptive behavior • developmentally delayed • suicide attempts

A single indicator does not prove that abuse is taking place, but the repeated presence of an indicator or a combination of indicators should alert educators to the possibility of abuse. Often there are no visible indicators