



TIPS FOR MANDATED REPORTERS

You do not need to have proof of sexual abuse to make a good faith report.

Most state laws require that you have reasonable suspicion. **Reasonable suspicion means:**

- You have witnessed a pattern of boundary violations by an adult or youth. **OR**
 - You have intervened in boundary violations and yet the person continues in similar behaviors. **OR**
 - You have received a disclosure from a child, or the child has told you about boundary violations toward them. **OR**
 - You have seen physical signs of sexual harm.
- Do not investigate on your own. Especially do not investigate physical signs. Report to the police or child protective services, or both. Generally, if the suspected offender is in the home with the child, it is better to contact child protective services.
 - Do not ask the child leading questions or try to draw out information.
 - Asking too many questions about abuse may cause distress in the child, and can interfere with prosecution of the alleged offender.
 - Sometimes the professionals may not be able to gather enough evidence to act on your report. Still, your report may become part of a series of reports that can lead to action, later.
 - Even though your report may not result in legal action, the investigation may cause other services to take place, like counseling.
 - It is best not to contact parents before making a report, especially if a parent or household member is the suspected abuser. This could put the child at further risk or lead to the destruction of evidence.
 - Most states require that the person who has reasonable suspicion be the one to make the report. Do not delegate this to someone else, even your supervisor.
 - After you have made the report, follow your organization's policy about who to notify.
 - You can ask to be told the outcome of your report, and what actions are being taken.
 - If you are not satisfied, you can ask to speak to a supervisor at child protective services or law enforcement.
 - If you have new information later, you can request it be added to your report.

Learn the reporting laws in your state:

Child Information Welfare Gateway www.childwelfare.gov/responding/mandated.cfm