

Reporting Child Abuse in Oregon



Everyone plays a role in preventing child abuse. Whether you are a mandatory reporter or a member of the public, you can help keep children safe in the community.

Knowing the signs and definitions of child abuse is a good first step. But when do you report — and when is it better to provide help to a family in need?

Child abuse defined

For all children under age 18 abuse includes:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Mental Injury
- Sexual Abuse
- Threat of Harm

When under the age of 21 and residing in or receiving services from a licensed or certified home or facility*, abuse includes the types described above **and** the following:

- Willful infliction of pain
- Abandonment
- Verbal abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Wrongful use of restraint
- Involuntary seclusion

Deciding when to call

Our brains are wired to find patterns and make quick decisions. This can cause “implicit bias,” making assumptions without all the facts. Being aware of your bias can improve your decision-making and widen your perspective.

Before deciding to report to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline, ask yourself, “Would I have the same level of concern if the child or family were of a similar race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, culture or religion as me?” If it were a different child or family, would the facts give reasonable cause to believe there is abuse?



When a family needs support, not a report, connect them with services in their community.



***Includes child-caring agency or proctor foster home, a certified foster/resource home or respite provider, or a developmental disabilities residential facility.**



When you have reasonable cause to believe there is abuse, be prepared to provide the following (if known) to a screener at the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline:

- ☐ Name, date of birth or age, and location for all adults and children involved.
- ☐ A description of the suspected abuse, including whether the child has current injuries.
- ☐ Detailed observations and statements made by the child or others.
- ☐ If applicable, a description of the child's unique needs.
- ☐ Information related to family functioning, resources and supports.
- ☐ Contact information, addresses, or other means to locate the individuals of concern.
- ☐ Race, ethnicity and language spoken by the child and family.
- ☐ Whether the child or family identify American Indian or Alaska Native heritage.

Confidentiality and you

- Oregon law protects the identity of the person making a report. Only Child Welfare staff and law enforcement may access the confidential reporter's information. In very few cases, court involvement may be required, and the reporter may be called as a witness.
- Mandatory reporters are required to identify themselves when calling the hotline. The hotline screener will ask for the mandatory reporter's name, contact information and date of birth.
- Do not ask someone else to make the report for you. Contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline if you suspect child abuse.

Learn more about child abuse reporting



[Visit the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse web page.](#)



[Visit the 211info web page for housing, funding, food and other resources](#), or call 211.



[Visit the Prevention Resources/Child Safety web page.](#)



[Take the Implicit Association Test \(IAT\) developed by Harvard to learn more about bias.](#)

Oregon Child Welfare Screening and Child Protective Services (CPS) Process Map

Step 1

Suspect child abuse?
Call the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-7233 (SAFE).

Step 2

Screener collects information and determines if the information requires documentation.

- When the incident involves certain settings, such as schools or residential facilities, it is forwarded to the ODHS Office of Training, Investigation and Safety (OTIS).

The information gathered from the screener will prompt them to cross report to law enforcement and proceed to either step 3 or step 4.

Step 3

Reported information does not include an allegation of child abuse and is documented and “closed at screening.”

Step 4

Reported information meets the definition of child abuse and is assigned for Child Protective Services (CPS) Assessment. CPS worker conducts a Safety Assessment over the next 60 days.

- The CPS worker may contact the reporter for additional information. The reporter may also contact the worker directly.

At the end of the Safety Assessment, it receives one of the following disposition outcomes.

- **Founded** - There is reasonable cause to believe abuse occurred.
- **Unfounded** - No evidence abuse occurred.
- **Unable to determine** - Insufficient evidence to indicate abuse occurred.

At the end of the Safety Assessment, the children’s safety results in proceeding to either step 6 or step 7.

At either result, the reporter is notified of the outcome of the assessment and whether services were offered to the family.

Step 6

If it is determined that the child is safe, the assessment is closed.

Step 7

If it is determined that the child is unsafe, either an in-home or out-of home safety plan is developed with the family.

- The family will be referred to services. Court involvement also may be necessary.

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer free of charge. Contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at Feedback.OregonChildAbuseHotline@odhsoha.oregon.gov or 1-855-503-7233 (voice/text). We accept all relay calls.