



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

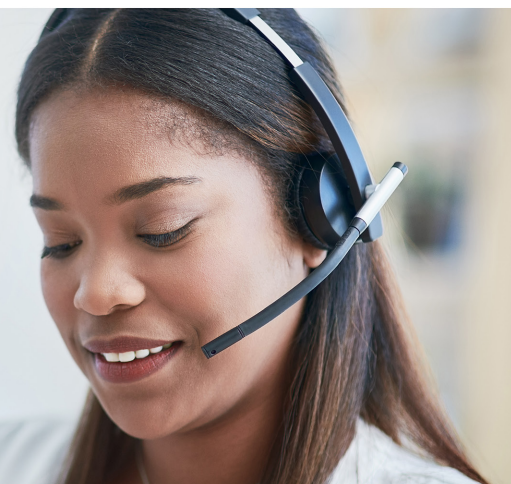
Contacting the Abuse Hotline

By phone

1-800-252-5400

Online

TXabusehotline.org



Mandatory Reporting

Statewide Intake (SWI) Overview

SWI handles reports of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation across the entire state of Texas.

- **The hotline is available 24/7/365.** Months during the school year are typically busier with longer hold times. Business hours, M-F are also busier.
- **If you have a concern that is an emergency** or that needs to be handled within 24 hours, it is best to use the hotline instead of online reporting. Concerns submitted through the e-report system are not processed immediately in most cases.

Duty to Report

State law requires anybody who has reasonable cause to believe a child, elderly person, or adult with a disability has been abused or neglected to make a report to Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) or a law enforcement agency.

Child Protective Investigations and Child Protective Services are responsible for protecting children from abuse and neglect, and providing services to children and families to ensure child safety.

Adult Protective Services protects elder adults and persons with disabilities from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Reporting Information

Important information needed for reports consists of:

- Name, age, address of child or person 65 years or older or adult with disabilities.
- Your name and contact information.
- Brief description of the situation and the child or vulnerable adult. Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems.

- For a child: parents' names and names of siblings in the home.
- For an adult: names of relatives in or outside the home and name of perpetrator.
- Collaterals.
- Explain how you know about the situation.

Signs of Abuse & Neglect of Children

Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment.
- Consistent concern for lack of personal hygiene that poses a health risk.
- Stealing or begging for food.
- Child unattended for long periods of time.
- Unaddressed need for dental care or other medical attention.

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child.

The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child.

Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations.
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury.
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body.
- Lack of reaction to pain.
- Extreme fear of going home or seeing parents.
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days.
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or leg.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance or low self-esteem caused by scapegoating or verbal abuse by caregivers.
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression.
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Evidence of injury to the genital area.
- Pregnancy in a young girl.
- Difficulty in sitting or walking.
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex.
- Sexual comments, behaviors, or play beyond what is considered age-appropriate behavior.
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age.
- Sexual victimization of other children.

Calls More Appropriate for Prevention Resources

- Family living in poverty (sleeping in cars/tents, poorly clothed/fed, lack utilities etc.) but there is no impairment of functioning of child.
- Custody/visitation/child support concerns.

- Behavioral concerns parents need help addressing and there are no safety concerns.
- Truancy/educational neglect or child's grades have deteriorated.
- Family does not follow car safety laws (car seat, seatbelt).
- Family conflict (divorce, separation, verbal altercations) with no safety threat.
- Parental marijuana or alcohol abuse when only older children are in the home.

Prevention

In Texas, we believe that children thrive in safe, stable, nurturing families, within their own communities. Communities that lack accessible supports and resources and are disproportionately affected by poverty can experience increased risk factors that lead to child abuse and neglect.

Despite the complex factors that can lead to child maltreatment, it can be prevented. Your role in supporting families in your community before abuse or neglect occurs cannot be emphasized enough.

We believe the following are ways you can play a role in prevention:

- Awareness of community needs and available resources.
- Be the bridge between families and these resources.
- Promote positive community norms.
- Strive for cultural humility.

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services serves people:

- 65 and older.
- 18 years and older with a mental, physical, or developmental disability that substantially impairs the person's ability to provide adequately for the person's care or protection.

A substantial impairment is a disability that grossly and chronically diminishes physical or mental ability to live independently or provide self-care.

APS Reporting

State law requires APS to investigate reports the following allegations:

- Physical Abuse.
- Sexual Abuse.
- Emotional or Verbal Abuse.
- Medical Neglect.
- Physical Neglect.
- Financial Exploitation.