

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## General request for information

**Q1: What is the address or phone number to my Child Welfare office?**

**A1:** You can find it at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.

**Q2: How can I find child support information?**

**A2:** Child Welfare does not oversee the Child Support Division; however, you can contact the Oregon Department of Justice Child Support Program by any of the ways below:

**Call:** 503-373-7300 or 800-850-0228

**TTY:** 800-735-2900

**Email:** [ChildSupportCustomerService@doj.state.or.us](mailto:ChildSupportCustomerService@doj.state.or.us)

**Web portal:** <https://customerportal.oregonchildsupport.gov/login>

**Branch office:** <https://www.doj.state.or.us/child-support/locations/>

**Q3: How can I find information about my Self-Sufficiency Program benefits application?**

**A3:** Contact the Self-Sufficiency Program to find this information. To find a local office, go to <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Offices/Pages/Self-Sufficiency.aspx>.

## Request from other states

**Q1: As a caseworker in another state, how can I access records for a family I am working with?**

**A1:** Please email your request to [RecReq.ORChildHot@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:RecReq.ORChildHot@dhsosha.state.or.us).

**Q2: Can you share the name and contact information of a family's Oregon caseworker?**

**A2:** Our receptionist will confirm your identity. The receptionist will then provide any contact information that may be helpful.

## Questions about custody

**Q1: Can Child Welfare intervene when a parent prevents contact between the child(ren) and the other parent?**

**A1:** Child Welfare does not intervene in custody cases or violations of custody agreements unless there is an allegation of child abuse. You can contact an attorney to determine the best course of action. You may also reach out to your local legal aid organization for them to possibly help you. The Oregon State Bar has a lawyer referral service you can access online. When you use this service, you can receive a 30-minute consultation for a maximum fee of \$35. Their contact information is:

**Hours:** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Friday

**Phone:** 503-684-3763 or toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-7636.

**Online referral request form:** <https://www.osbar.org/public/ris/>

**Q2: What support is there for a person providing long-term care to a child if the parent returns to assume care?**

**A2:** This is a difficult situation for all involved. However, Child Welfare cannot give legal advice (see the answer above). If you have concerns about the children's safety in the care of their parents, you can make a report to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

**Q3: How can I find information about a previous case outcome?**

**A3:** Please contact the child protective services caseworker or their supervisor at the local Oregon Department of Human Services office to request this information. If you know the county in which the case was opened, you can contact that office. A list of the offices is at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.

**Q4: Is it best to contact Child Welfare or the police when there is concern for a child's safety?**

**A4:** If you believe there is a need for an urgent or immediate response, please contact 911. Otherwise, contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233).

## Questions related to child abuse

**Q1: What is child abuse?**

**A1:** Child abuse is defined by [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.010](#) and [Oregon Administrative Rules 413-015-0115](#). If you suspect a child may be exposed to any of the abuse types, please make a report to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

**Q2: Can a child be left home alone at the age of ten?**

**A2:** Age alone does not determine a child’s ability to be safe while alone. However, Oregon law indicates a child under age 10 may not be left alone for a period that could endanger their welfare.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway has a valuable fact sheet for families called “Leaving Your Child Home Alone” (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/homealone.pdf>). It walks adults through considerations such as:

- Age and maturity
- When and how long the child is left alone (circumstances)
- The child’s understanding of safety skills (how to handle an emergency)
- Whether the child is ready to care for younger children, and
- Tips for parents to prepare their child.

**Q3: Is it abuse when a parent or caregiver uses drugs but not in front of their children?**

**A3:** Screeners try to understand how parent or caregiver substance use affects their ability to care for their child safely. There may be a concern for abuse if there are indications that drug use influences parent or caregiver:

- Ability to provide for the child’s physical, emotional, sexual or mental health, or
- Standards for food, clothing and shelter of the child.

If you are concerned for abuse, contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline

**Q4: When a family experiences homelessness, is that considered abuse?**

**A4:** Residential instability is a problem faced by many families in Oregon. It is not considered abuse unless the parent is unable or unwilling to provide for their child’s basic needs for food, clothing, shelter and protection.

**Q5: As a child concerned for my own safety, who should I contact?**

**A5:** If you feel unsafe, a screener will need to talk with you about why that is. Once the screener has more information, the screener can:

- Give you resources, or
- Determine if there is a report of abuse.

## **Q6: How do I know if an individual is a sex offender?**

**A6:** There are web sites such as the National Sex Offender Public Website located at <https://www.nsopw.gov/> that may be able to help you in your search. At the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline, we are unable to provide personal or confidential information about an individual or family.

## **Mandatory reporter questions**

### **Q1: Who is a mandatory reporter?**

**A1:** Under Oregon law, a mandatory reporter is any public or private official. **You may be one.** For a list of who is one, please refer to the [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse webpage](#).

### **Q2: When is a report required?**

**A2:** If you are a mandatory reporter, you must report when you have reasonable cause to believe:

- Any child you come in contact with has suffered abuse, or
- Any person you come in contact with has abused a child.

You shall immediately report or cause a report to be made in the way [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.015](#) describes.

Anyone can, and should, report suspicions of child abuse. The safety of Oregon's children is a priority for all our communities.

### **Q3: What information should I be prepared to give the hotline when making a report?**

**A3:** Be prepared to provide the following information when it is known to you. This information is helpful. However, it is not required to make a report:

- Name and date of birth or age for all adults and children involved
- A description of the abuse, including whether the child has current injuries
- The alleged perpetrator's name, location and access to the child
- Whether the child has American Indian or Alaska Native heritage
- Phone numbers, including area code
- Any cultural or language considerations, race and ethnicity
- Addresses, directions or other ways to locate the persons of concern
- Additional information related to family functioning, resources and supports
- Detailed observations and statements made by the child or others
- A description of the child's disability, including any special needs

## Request for case information

### **Q1: As a mandatory reporter. Am I allowed to know the outcome of the report I made?**

**A1:** It depends. The screener determines:

- If a report should be documented, and
- If it meets criteria to be assigned or closed at screening (CAS).

The screener must let you know the screening decision if you gave your contact information.

When you call for a report status, the receptionist who takes your call will:

- Request your screening report ID number
- Provide you with the decision (assigned or closed at screening)
- Ask you if you want to speak to the screener who took your report about the decision. If you do, the receptionist will gather your name and phone number or email address, or both. The receptionist will then send an email requesting a reply to the screener and their supervisor.

### **Q2: What is my Child Welfare caseworker's number?**

**A2:** Please contact your local Child Welfare office for your caseworker's number. You can find contact information at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.

### **Q3: I am the reporter; can you tell me when Child Welfare will check on the child?**

**A3:** When a screener determines a report will be assigned, the screener must let you know (if you leave contact information), that a child protective services worker will make efforts to inform you at a later date about the following:

- If contact with the alleged victim was made
- If the abuse occurred, and
- If services will be provided.

When a screener determines they will close a report at screening, the screener must let you know:

- Contact with the alleged victim will not be made
- An abuse determination will not be made, and
- Whether services will be provided.

If you have not received this information about a report you made, please contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233) and press 3 to reach the receptionist.

**Q4: As a parent of the child of concern, how do I determine if a case is open to Child Welfare?**

**A4:** Please contact your local Child Welfare office. You can find contact information at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.

**Q5: How do I request my own records from Child Welfare?**

**A5:** Please contact the Department of Human Services Public Records Unit at <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Pages/RecordRequests.aspx>.

## Request for Child Welfare to respond

**Q1: What is the difference between a “welfare check” and a report to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline?**

**A1:** To request a law enforcement welfare check, please call your local non-emergency line. If you suspect your child is being abused, call the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline to make a report.

**Q2: Is lack of attendance at school considered abuse?**

**A2:** Child Welfare does not intervene in education attendance unless there is a safety concern.

**Q3: As a parent in need of support for my child, what are my options?**

**A3:** Contact your child’s medical provider for assistance. You can also find resources at the [Oregon Health Authority’s Child and Family Behavioral Health site](#).

If you or a child in your care is at risk of harming themselves or others, please contact:

- Law enforcement in an emergency, or
- Your local mental health crisis number.

## Law enforcement

**Q1: As a probation officer, can I confirm whether the family I'm working with has an open Child Welfare case?**

**A1:** Yes. The receptionist will ask for your identifying information and number. If there is an open case, we will share your information with the current worker and their supervisor. Upon request, we will provide you the local office point of contact and phone number. If you believe there may be a concern for child safety, please contact the hotline and speak with a screener.

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233). We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.

DHS 2458 (09/2021)