

Questions to Consider Before Calling the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline

Contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-7233 (SAFE)



Find community information and resources through 211.

What is the most important thing to remember?

You should report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse; *you do not have to prove it.*

If you suspect a child has been abused, call the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at **1-855-503-SAFE (7233)** to discuss your concerns.

What resources and supports does the family need?

- What resources is the family already accessing or trying to access? Are there barriers to access?
- Are there other professionals, such as a school counselor involved? If so, what resources or supports have they tried to connect the family to?
- Has school staff spoken to the parent or caregiver about the issue, or do they plan to? If so, what was their response?

What are warning signs of child abuse?

We group them into three categories:

- **Physical signs** present on the child
- **Behavioral signs** or statements made by the **child**, or
- **Behavioral signs** or statements made by the **parent or caregiver**.

Additional information is valuable. However, it is not your responsibility to investigate the situation. If you have concerns, it is appropriate for you to engage the child in a conversation to seek more information.

- It is essential to only use the child's own words when clarifying.
- Be curious and unassuming. **"Tell me more about that ..."** or **"How did that happen?"** are both open-ended questions that can allow a child to share as much information as they are comfortable sharing.
- If the explanation does not seem to fit an injury, **make a report.**



Find additional resources on the **ODHS Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse** page.

What to do when a child makes a disclosure of possible abuse:

- **Remain calm.** A child may retract information or stop talking if they sense a strong reaction.
- Find a private and **quiet place to talk** without interruptions.
- Listen intently and follow up with **“Then what happened?”** to allow the child an opportunity to use their own words to describe the situation.
- Reassure the child they are **not in trouble**.
- **Let the child know what you will do:** “We need to tell someone who knows how to help children and families.”
- **Support the child:** “I’m sorry that happened to you.”
- Do what you can to **make certain the child is safe** from further abuse by making a report.

Do not defer your obligation to someone else when you suspect child abuse, even if internal policies direct you to.

Report immediately to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline or law enforcement **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**, even when you are not working. Report even if you do not know the names of involved individuals. Also, make sure you **identify yourself**; it is not a mandatory report when you are anonymous.

Families often come in contact with ODHS Child Welfare because they need help.

- ▶ Find prevention and resources on the **ODHS Child Safety** page.
- ▶ Find answers to more **frequently asked questions here**.
- ▶ Find additional resources on the **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse** page.
- ▶ Contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at **1-855-503-7233 (SAFE)**.

Please consider providing feedback or asking questions by sending them to

**Feedback.Oregon
ChildAbuseHotline@
dhsosha.state.or.us**

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.