



**NACA**

Missouri Network  
Against Child Abuse

Empowering Missouri's Mandated Reporters

Missouri Coordinated School Health Conference

February 2024

[Protectmokids.com](https://protectmokids.com)

# The Plan

Know the legal requirements of Mandated Reporters in Missouri

Know the indicators and Risk Factors of Child Abuse and Neglect

Plan for Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect

Effectively Report Child Abuse and Neglect

Learn more about your role as a mandated reporter!

Take the 2 -hour FREE online training:

**[Protectmokids.com](https://protectmokids.com)**

# When is a mandated reporter required to report?

You do not need ALL of the facts, just the facts that have come to your attention.

- reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or
- observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect

Section 210.115 RSMo

“Reasonable Cause to Suspect”  
also known as “Reasonable  
Suspicion”

Cause that would lead a  
reasonable person to believe that  
child abuse or neglect may have  
occurred or is occurring based on  
all the facts and circumstances  
known to that person.

# Legal Requirements of Missouri's Mandated Reporters

## Section 210.115 RSMo

- Mandated reporters will make a direct and immediate report to the hotline.
- No internal investigation can be initiated until a report has been made.
- No supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit an individual from making a report.
- The person making the report cannot be subject to any sanction, penalty or adverse employment action.
- Every employer shall ensure... immediate and unrestricted access to communications technology necessary to making a report and be temporarily relieved of other work duties while making the report.

# Not sure if something should be reported?

## Section 210.115 RSMo

- What if Children's Division is already involved with the family?
  - Make a report
- What if a mandated reporter receives information about child abuse and neglect from a 3rd party ?
  - Make a report
- What if a colleague/coworker also suspects abuse?
  - Make a report

# Can I be punished for making a report?

## Immunity/Penalties Section 210.135 RSMo.

- Anyone making a report in good faith is immune from liability.
- Immunity is provided regardless of the outcome of the report
- Failure to report: Class A misdemeanor
- Up to 1 year in jail
- Up to \$1000 fine
- Filing a false report is also a Class A misdemeanor

# Indicators/Risk factors of Child Abuse and Neglect

What is child abuse and neglect?

# Definition of Abuse and Neglect

## 210.110 RSMo.

### **Abuse** defined in 210.110(1)

- Abuse is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child's care, custody, and control (not limited)
- Except, discipline including spanking, administered in a reasonable manner, shall not be construed to be abuse.

### **Neglect** defined in 210.110(9)

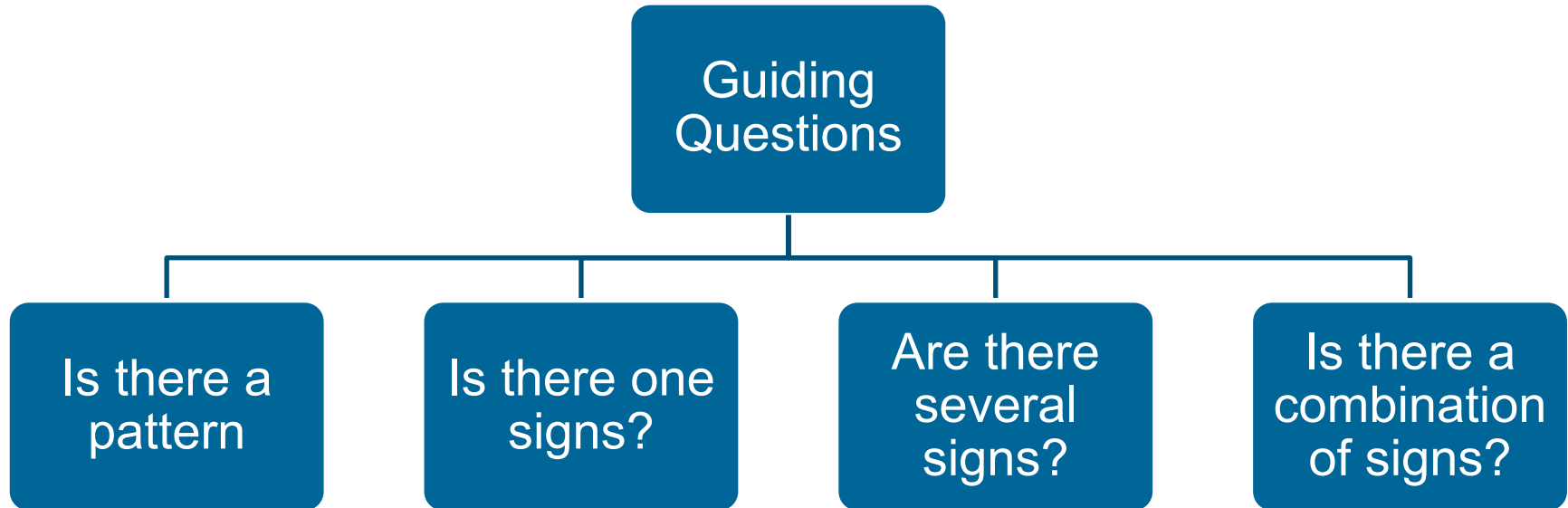
- failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child's well being.



# Classifications of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
  - Youth with Problematic Sexual Behavior
  - Technology Facilitated Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
  - Educational Neglect
  - Medical Neglect
- Human Trafficking

# Recognize the Signs



# Physical Abuse

Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes

Fading bruises or marks noticeable after an absence from school

Frequently wears clothing that are not seasonal to cover their bodies

Withdrawn and/or aggressive – extreme behaviors

Frightened of parents and protests/cries when it is time to go home

Shrinks at the approach of adults

Bizarre explanation of injuries. “Does the story match the injury?”

Bruises to an infant should be particularly suspect given his or her limited mobility and opportunity to harm him or herself.

Non-accidental physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting, burning, or otherwise harming a child,....

These injuries are considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child.

# Sexual Abuse

Any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors, when one exerts power over the other.

- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Child attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment.
- Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior for their age.
- Nightmares and/or bed wetting
- Sudden extreme behavior changes, secretive behavior.

Mathews, B., & Collin-Vézina, D. (2019). Child Sexual Abuse: Toward a Conceptual Model and Definition.

# Other forms of child maltreatment

## Technology Facilitated Sexual Abuse

- If you suspect online child exploitation report to the hotline.
- Also, you may report to the Cybertipline or call National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's Call Center at 1-800-THE-LOST.

## Human Trafficking

- When reporting, specify to the hotline staff that you suspect commercial child sexual abuse or sex trafficking. Victims may be eligible for state or federal services.

# Emotional Abuse

Show extremes in behavior.

Is either inappropriately adult (Ex: parenting other children) or inappropriately infantile (Ex: frequent rocking or head-banging)

Is delayed in physical or emotional development

Psychosomatic symptoms

Reports a lack of attachment to caregiver

Has attempted suicide (more often an adolescent)

Caregiver consistently belittles or berates the child and refuses to help the child when needed

<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/cmsimages/adrules/csr/current/13csr/13c35-31.pdf>

Any injury to a child's psychological capacity or emotional stability demonstrated by an observable or substantial change or impairment in the child's behavior, emotional response, or cognition, which may include, but is not limited to:

- anxiety,
- depression,
- withdrawal, or
- aggressive behavior.

# Neglect

Failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child's well-being.

RSMO Sect. 210.110

**Poverty is not neglect!**

# Poverty does not cause neglect

Linking a family to resources should not take the place of reporting if you suspect child abuse and/or neglect.

- Home Visiting Programs
- Crisis Care Help for Families
- Family Assistance Programs:
  - Food Stamps, utility bills and child healthcare
- Mental Health, Substance Use Support
- Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Parentlink Warmline
- Missouri Family Resources
- Courage2ReportMO
- United Way 211

- **Poverty** is when the caregiver does not have the resources to provide for the need.
- **Neglect** is when the caregiver has the resources but chooses not to provide for the need.

Mandated reporters are often in the position to be effective supporters. When possible, mandated reporters can connect a family to community supports.



# Educational Neglect

Failure to provide an appropriate education and to promote school attendance as required by MO law.

MO law requires all children ages 7- 17 to attend school with the exception of a child who has successfully completed 16 credits towards high school graduation.

Children ages 5 and 6 are required to attend school when they have been enrolled in public school by their parent or guardian.

RSMo Section 167.031

Children's Division will screen for information indicating that the school has made good faith efforts to resolve the problem and that the caretaker is non-cooperative and has not resolved the problem.

# Medical Neglect

The denial or deprivation, by those responsible for the care, custody and control of the child of medical or surgical treatment or intervention which necessary to remedy or ameliorate a medical condition which is life threatening or cause injury.

There are exception for reasons relating to religious beliefs. However, the juvenile court my order that medical services be provided to the child in such a situation if such services are necessary for the health of the child.

RSMO Section 167.181

# How do I respond to a child who discloses to me?

# When responding to a disclosure remember: I CARE

- **Information.** Your role is not to investigate. Who is the child? What happen?
  - Do not make the child repeat disclosure.
- **Calm.** Take a breath, listen, avoid negative comments about abuse and answer all questions honestly. Express no blame or shame.
- **Assure** the child that you can handle the information. Be proactive, have a script.
  - Ex. “Thank you for telling me. I will need to let someone know and we will take it step by step.”
- **Report.** Contact hotline directly and immediately
- **Encourage** policies that create environments where child safety is prioritized.

[How to handle a disclosure of abuse from a child video](#)

# Effectively Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

What is the best way to report my concerns?

Where do I report?

# Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline

## 1-800-392-3738

- Reports are to be made immediately to the 24-hour, 7 day a week CA/N hotline, which is maintained by Children's Division
- The Hotline is staffed by trained Children's Service Workers at Children's Division

# Online Reporting

- Online reporting is available for mandated reporters only and should only be used to report non-emergencies.
- If it is an emergency, call 911 immediately and then report it directly to the hotline.
- Note: You can save an incomplete report for up to 72 hours.

The completed report is immediately uploaded to a secure server and will get an email with an assigned call number, indicating whether or not your report meets the definition of child abuse or neglect.

***It is recommended users create an account prior to ever needing to make a report.***

<https://dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/Mandated-Reporters-CAN-Online-Reporting-Instructions.pdf>

# Reporting Effectively

To report effectively explain how the suspected abuse has impacted the child.

- Changes in behavior/emotions/moods
- Expressions of fear
- Impacts of the unsafe environment
- Interactions with other children and/or adults
- Impact on grades
- Be precise (dates/times/locations)  
Generalities are not easily categorized

The role of the hotline unit to gather as much information as possible. They will ask several questions and it is okay to not know all the answers.

[Mock Hotline Call Video Example](#)



# Reporting Procedure

Children's Division screening will determine that:

- The child is under the age of 18 years
- The alleged abuse or neglect is having an adverse effect on the child
- The report meets the definition of abuse or neglect as defined by law
- Identifying information is available to locate the child/family.

# What happens next?

## Children's Division Process

- Through a Structured Decision-Making Screening Process the report is classified as...
  - Investigation,
  - Family Assessment,
  - Juvenile Reports,
  - Referrals or
  - Documented call
- The information is transmitted to designated CD circuit.
- 3 to 72-hour response timeframe. Majority of children are seen within 24 hours.

[http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines\\_can\\_reports.pdf](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines_can_reports.pdf)

# What happens next? (cont.)

## Children's Division Process

- You will be contacted within 48 hours of making a report.
- If the worker is unable to get ahold of the reporter, the investigation/assessment will begin with seeing the child(ren).
- Investigations/assessments are to be completed within 45 days.
- Reporter information is never shared with the alleged perpetrator or family members of the child(ren)
- Reporters are entitled to the findings of report by CD.

[http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines\\_can\\_reports.pdf](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/pdf/guidelines_can_reports.pdf)

# The Plan

**Mandated reporters should be proactive and have a plan to appropriately handle suspicions, discovery or disclosure of abuse or neglect.**

- Know the legal requirements of Mandated Reporters in Missouri
- Know the indicators and Risk Factors of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Plan for Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect
- Effectively Report Child Abuse and Neglect

# Case Scenario

## Considering Poverty and/or Neglect

- Tiana is an 11-year-old girl she continually comes to school with unclean clothes and being bullied as a result. Tiana voiced that their washing machine is broken, and it is expensive to fix. She walks home from school and looks after herself until her mother comes home from work at 7 PM.
- Tiana falls asleep at school often, which is impacting her grades. She stays up late to spend time with her mother, Linda, once she is home from work. Linda voiced would like to find a different job to be home with Tiana after school and have her go to sleep sooner but her work schedule is not flexible.

**What is your next step as a mandated reporter reporter?**

# Additional Resources



- [Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline](#)
  - 1-800-392-3738 and [online](#)
  - [Setup online reporting in Missouri](#)
- [Essential4kids.org](#) – Missouri child abuse/neglect resources
- [D2L.org](#) – child sexual abuse prevention
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse America](#)
- [Cybertipline](#) 1-800-THE-LOST
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678
- The National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

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