

# Kids Need Essential Workers to Report Abuse During COVID-19 Crisis

A resource for essential workers describing signs of child abuse and where to report.  
Reporting child abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility.

## Kids are Counting on Adults to Protect Them

This means YOU! This resource is for home delivery, pharmacy, grocery store and other essential workers keeping our communities running. It outlines signs of abuse and neglect and where to report.

In times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. However, reports of child abuse and neglect in Oklahoma have declined dramatically.

Children are not going to school, activities, places of worship and other public places where adults look out for their safety and well-being.

## Trust your Gut

If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe – report.

## Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services

When you report, you are asking for a professional to help a child and their family. You do not need proof. You are not making an accusation.

## You May Be the Only Person to Act

If you reasonably suspect a child is unsafe - report.

Anonymous reports are accepted from anyone. Anyone making a report in good faith is protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action. Your identity is held confidential and will not be revealed.

### Where To Report

24-hour/7 days a week  
Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline  
1-800-522-3511

If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

Free child abuse prevention and reporting training for children and adults available at [carecenter-okc.org](http://carecenter-okc.org).  
For more information, go to [cacok.com](http://cacok.com).

## Some Signs a Child is Not Safe

### Physical abuse

- Child appears frightened of the caregiver.
- Child has burns, bites, broken bones, bruising, black eyes or complaints of pain.
- Caregiver offers no explanation of a child's injury, the parent "blames" the child's behavior or personality for the injury. Ask yourself "Does the story match the injury?"

### Sexual abuse

- Child attaches very quickly to strangers or new adults in their environment.
- Demonstrates unusual sexual knowledge or behavior for their age.
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Witnessing an adult inappropriately touching a child, watching pornography with a child or saying sexual things to a child.

### Emotional Abuse

- Child shows extremes in behavior: overly aggressive or compliant.
- Appears emotionally unattached to caregiver and others.
- Caregiver constantly blames, belittles or berates the child and refuses to help the child when needed.

### Neglect

- Child begs or steals food, has severe poor hygiene or states that no one at home provides care.
- Witnessing a child using alcohol or other drugs.
- Highly stressful family situations and/or adults in home abusing alcohol or other drugs.
- Unlocked weapons or guns in the home.



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# Kids Need All Adults to Report Abuse During COVID-19 Crisis

A resource for all adults describing signs of child abuse and where to report.  
Reporting child abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility.

## Kids are Counting on All Adults to Protect Them

This means YOU! This resource is for any adult who interacts with a child. It outlines signs of abuse and neglect and where to report.

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# Kids Need Schools to Continue Reporting Abuse During COVID-19 Crisis

Empowering teachers, counselors, bus drivers and nutrition staff in their role as mandated reporters during the COVID-19 Crisis.

## Students Not Being in School Creates Barriers to Reporting Abuse

In times of crisis and economic instability, child abuse and neglect rates increase. However, reports of child abuse and neglect in Oklahoma have declined dramatically. The ability to speak up for kids' safety is crucial at this time.

## To Report Effectively, Explain how the Suspected Abuse has Impacted the Child

Example: (Child) has not engaged in the virtual classroom in 10 days, but has internet access. I have made 5 failed attempts to contact parents. Concerned that (child's) lack of participation is negatively impacting his/her education. (Child) experienced physical abuse one year ago.

## Making a Report is Asking for Help and Services

If you reasonably suspect a child is unsafe - report. You do not need proof. You are not making an accusation. You are asking for a professional to help a child and their family.

## You May Be the Only Person to Act

If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe - report.

### Where To Report

24-hour/7 days a week  
Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline  
1-800-522-3511

Make an online report at  
[sto.hotline.referral@okdhs.org](mailto:sto.hotline.referral@okdhs.org)

Free child abuse prevention and reporting training for children and adults available at [carecenter-okc.org](http://carecenter-okc.org). For more information, go to [cacok.com](http://cacok.com).

## Helpful Tips for Protecting Children

Continue to let students know you remain a supportive, caring adult in their lives:

- Check in regularly with students and/or caregivers. Provide encouraging messages.
- Ask questions to engage children. Ex: "Give me one word that describes how you feel today?" "How is learning from home different from learning at school?"

Signs of Concerns:

- For students with technology/internet access: lack of virtual attendance or homework not completed over a long period of time.
- If you have had no contact at all with a family after many repeated phone calls/messages.
- If a child communicates they feel unsafe, you see a child in a dangerous environment or you notice a significant change in a child's mood/behavior.

Make an extra effort with children who:

- Have a history of emotional, sexual, physical abuse or neglect, drug use or discussed/attempted suicide.
- Are responsible for the care of other children or live in a highly stressful family situation with limited support systems.
- Require assistance due to physical, mental, behavioral or medical disabilities or delays.

Legal Responsibilities and Protections:

- School personnel are mandated reporters. If you have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, you must directly report it immediately to the hotline 1-800-522-3511.
- No administrator or supervisor may impede or inhibit any report.
- When you make a report in good faith you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action.



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