



History

- The Martin-Aldridge Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Act adopted by Legislature in 1983
- Established the Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention “The Children’s Trust Fund”



Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Programs

- Parent Education & Support
- Fatherhood
- Home Visitation
- Community Awareness
- Respite Care
- School based
- Non-school based after school
- Mentoring



State of Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention



The ABC’s of Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect for Alabama School Personnel

Learning your legal obligations to reporting the signs of suspected child abuse



Overview

- History and Mission of the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (ADCANP) & Prevent Child Abuse Alabama (PCAA)
- Define and identify the signs of suspected child abuse and neglect
- Role of a Mandatory Reporter
- Impact of Abuse
- Prevention of Abuse
- Questions



Added to Mandatory Reporter Law

- Physical Therapists
- Public and private K-12 Employees
- Employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education



Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

- Community-Based Prevention Programs
- Public Policy Advocacy
- Public Education
- Network of Grantees
- Affiliated with National Organizations
 - National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds
 - Prevent Child Abuse America



Other Changes to Mandatory Reporter Law

- The statement "or cause reports to be made of the same" has been eliminated from the law.
- It is the responsibility of the mandatory reporter to make the report and follow up with a written report to the county DHR.



What is a Mandatory Reporter?

Any person whose profession brings them in contact with children on a daily basis is legally obligated to report signs of suspected child abuse or neglect.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| • Employees at hospitals, clinics and sanitariums | • Nurses |
| • Social Workers | • Podiatrists |
| • Child Care Employees | • Chiropractors |
| • Clergy | • Optometrists |
| • School Teachers/Officials | • Osteopaths |
| • Dentists | • Coroners |
| • Law Enforcement | • Medical Examiners |
| • Peace Officers | • Surgeons |
| • Mental Health Professionals | • Physician |
| • Pharmacists | • Doctors |



Physical Abuse

Abuse means harm or threatened harm to the health or welfare of a child through:

- Non-accidental physical injury
- Sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Burning
- Pushing
- Shaking
- Any other physical act that can cause injury to a child

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)



Signs to Look for with Physical Abuse

- Bruises
- Marks in the shape of an object
- Unexplained bruises, burns or cuts
- Fear of adults
- Destructiveness toward self or others
- Poor social skills
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Clothing that may be inappropriate



What is Child Abuse?

Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare which can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.



Different Types of Child Abuse

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect/ Failure to thrive





Erin's Law

- Erin Merryn – child sexual abuse victim turned advocate to pass legislation in each state
- Alabama passed Erin's Law 2015 legislative session and signed into law by Gov. Bentley on June 11, 2015
- Establishes Governor's Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- CTF working closely with SDE & DHR with task force appointees



Sexual Abuse

- *Sexual abuse* includes:
 - The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct
 - Any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct
 - The rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children
 - Incest with children

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)

- *Sexual exploitation* includes:

- Allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution
- Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)



Recent Headlines – Student/Teacher Inappropriate Sexual Contact

- Pinson teacher arrested on charges of inappropriate sexual contact with student
- Pell City teacher accused of having sexual contact with high school student
- Alabama leads nation in inappropriate student-teacher relationships, study says
- Teacher, 37, who is charged with sexual relationship with a student gets **MARRIED** to her now that she is 18
- Affidavit: Opp teacher's sexual contact with students started in 2013
- Former Stanhope teacher convicted of sexual contact with student



Signs to Look for with Sexual Abuse

- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Unusual interest in or inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Over-compliance
- Pain during urination
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent vomiting
- Wetting pants



Neglect

Neglect means negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter.

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)

- Physical neglect
- Educational neglect
- Emotional neglect



Signs to Look for with Neglect

- Clothing that is dirty, torn, poorly fitting or inappropriate for the weather
- Sleepiness
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Inappropriate responsibility for younger siblings
- Frequent tardiness or absences from school
- Apparent lack of supervision



Emotional Abuse

• Emotional Abuse includes non-accidental mental injury.

- Belittling
- Terrorizing
- Lack of nurture
- Rejecting
- Inconsistent parenting
- Violent environment

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)



Signs to Look for with Emotional Abuse

- Depression or withdrawal
- Lack of emotion
- Lack of interest
- Speech, sleep or eating disorders
- Repetitive actions, such as rocking, sucking or biting
- Increased emotional needs



How to File a Report

• Phone the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) in your county

- Montgomery (334) 293-3305
- Birmingham (205) 423-4850
- Mobile (251) 450-7018
- Huntsville (256) 427-6200



Reports can also go to the DHR State Family Services Division (334) 242-9500

If a life-threatening situation exists - DIAL 911



What information should you include in a Report?

- Child's name & location
- Names & addresses of parents or guardians
- Type and extent of child's injuries
- Information about previous injury that might be related
- Your name and the name of organization, school or agency
- Name of person or persons responsible for the abuse



What is your liability?

All persons reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (whether required by law or not) are presumed to be acting in good faith. Alabama law provides immunity from liability for actions by mandatory reporters.

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-9

It is not necessary to prove that the abuse or neglect happened. You must have a reasonable suspicion.



Is your job protected?

“A public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect... shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor”

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-3(g)