

Kids Need Mandated Reporters to Continue Reporting Abuse During COVID-19 Crisis

Empowering service providers and other professionals in their role as mandated reporters during the COVID-19 crisis.



Children not being in a consistent contact with service providers, schools, and other professionals 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 Marin County have declined during this crisis. The ability to speak up for children's safety is crucial at this time.

To report effectively, explain how family dynamics or parent's behavior directly results in abuse or neglect to the child or otherwise has impacted the child.

For example, a parent can suffer from a mental health condition or have a drug or alcohol problem, but if possible, obtain information on how this impacted the child's safety, caused injury, or resulted in neglect issues. If a child reports being hit, ask when it happened, where on the body they were hit, what they were hit with, and if there are marks, injuries or bruises.

If there are "red flags" but not quite enough to report, welfare checks are available through the local law enforcement agencies. Call your city's law enforcement non-emergency number, and ask for a welfare check, citing concerns about a child's well-being.

You may be the only person to act.

If something does not look, sound, or feel safe, call the reporting hotline to discuss your concerns.

Where to Report

24-hours/seven days a week

Marin County CFS Hotline

1-415-473-7153

Helpful Tips for Protecting Children

Make an extra effort to connect with children whom you were previously concerned about, before the shelter-in-place orders.

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

- Check in regularly with children and caregivers. Provide encouraging messages.
- Children will not feel comfortable describing an abusive or neglectful incident if the parent/caregiver involved in the incident is in the room. Try to talk with the child alone if possible.
- Ask open-ended questions to allow the children to give their account of the incident. Information should be based on the facts presented; do not make assumptions or draw your own conclusions or inferences.

Sign of concern:

- If you have had no contact at all with a family or child after many repeated phone calls/messages.
- If a child communicates there was an incident, you see a child in a dangerous environment, you notice a significant change in a child's mood or behavior, or they appear to be in emotional distress.

Reporting to Children and Family Services:

- It is not your responsibility to do an investigation, but you do need to get enough information to have a reasonable suspicion that a child was deliberately abused or neglect by their parent or caregiver.
- By making a report to CFS, you are asking a professional social worker to determine if a child needs help and intervention.
- Please be prepared with names, addresses, and phone numbers.