

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

What School Personnel Need To Do

Module III

How to report...



Now that we know *when* to call...

There are actually ***two*** telephone contacts to
be made:

- 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873)
and
- Local law enforcement authorities



“Dual reporting” ...

(notification to law enforcement authorities)

- Requires that the school district identify a person to make a contact to law enforcement.
- This need not be the person who contacted the DCP&P hotline. More specifically...
- School districts shall require “the principal or other designated school official(s) to notify law enforcement authorities of potentially missing, abused or neglected child situations” pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11 (a) 3.
- It is recommended that it be one designated person, for the purpose of consistency and accountability.
- In my district, the person is _____.



A brief note about the “Hotline”

- For informational purposes, the “Hotline” is officially known as...

The State Central Registry (SCR)

- It is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



The recommended practice for school personnel when calling the Hotline:

- As school personnel, you will be asked to supply all known information on a suspected child abuse/neglect situation.
- Although not required, a staff member can assist the person making the call and provide additional information.



A scenario on making a call...

- One of the school bus drivers reports to the principal that he has overheard a child talking about being hit by his mother. He knows he needs to report this but is unsure of the child's name and home address. Also, he knows he would feel more confident in having the principal assist him. He tells the principal exactly what he heard that morning on the bus. After they both confirm the identity of the child, the principal places the call to the hotline, first introducing herself and then the bus driver. The information is successfully conveyed.



Additional practices for school personnel when contacting the Hotline:

- The screener will ask for the name of the caller.
- The caller should supply his or her name, title and how he/she knows the child. This will greatly assist the screener in compiling useful information.
- The screener will guide the caller by asking a few questions. (Call screeners follow a standard protocol.)
- If the caller is not comfortable with the response of the screener, the caller has the right to ask to speak with a supervisor at the Hotline.



Just provide the facts...

Details Make a Difference – if you know

- **Who** - Identify the people involved – the child, the alleged perpetrator, the perpetrator's relationship to the child; parents, siblings, others in the home; dates of birth, addresses.
- **What** - What type of abuse/neglect is suspected? Describe the incident. What happened that caused your concern? What is the child's current condition?
- **Where** - Where did the incident take place? Where is the child now? Does the alleged perpetrator have access to the child?



Just the facts...

- **When** - When did the incident happen? What is the frequency of the abuse/neglect? When did you learn about it?
- **How** - How urgent is the need for intervention? Is there a likelihood of danger for the caseworker?
- Is the child in need of medical treatment? Has the child been examined or treated by the school nurse? Details?
- School personnel also should let DCP&P/IAIU know **when** and **how** the child will be released from school to ensure the child's safety.
- The DCP&P investigator has the right to remove the child from the school building.
- The DCP&P investigator also has the right to have access to and copies of student records.



When an abuse/neglect problem is detected in school, make the call from the school.

Failure to do this or “*making the call when I get home...*”

- Could allow a further incident to occur.
- Could cause the child to be seen in a less neutral setting (i.e.: at home where the trouble may lie).
- The requirement to call law enforcement may be delayed - or not happen at all.



What if I am not sure if a child has been abused?

- Err on the side of caution! Call the Hotline and they will help determine if the situation should be investigated as potential child abuse or neglect.
- By law (N.J.S.A.9:6-8.13), you are protected from civil or criminal liability, discharge from employment, and discrimination, if you make a report “in good faith.”
- N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11 (a) 10. also includes this requirement for school district policies: “A statement that prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports or causes a report to be made of a potential missing, abused or neglected child situation pursuant to N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.13.”



What if I suspect abuse and DO NOT report it?

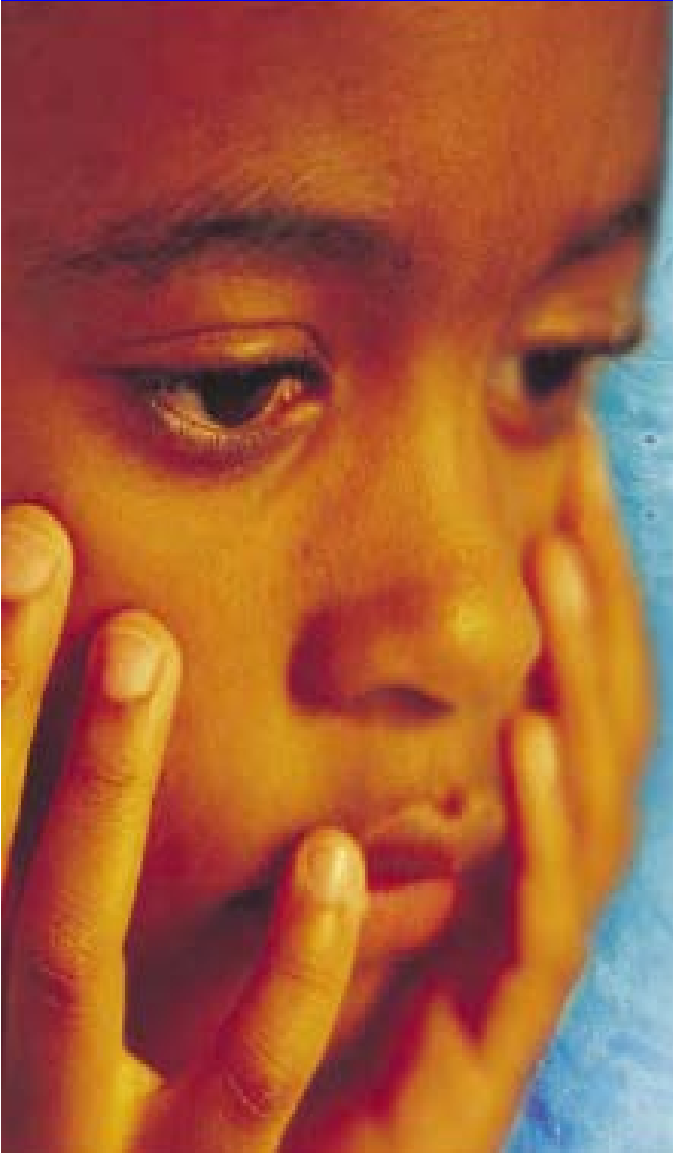
- Knowingly not reporting abuse or neglect can have devastating consequences on a child and legal consequences on YOU!
- “Any person knowingly violating the provisions of this act including the failure to report an act of child abuse having reasonable cause to believe that an act of child abuse has been committed, is a disorderly person.”
N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.14
- Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse according to the law is a disorderly person and subject to a fine up to \$1,000 or up to 6 months in prison, or both!
N.J.S.A. 2C:43-3 and 2C:43-8



Summary of Module III

- School staff, volunteers or interns must call child welfare authorities: the State Central Registry- “Hotline”- at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) *and* local law enforcement authorities.
- You will be asked to provide specific information and respond to targeted questions by the screener when reporting to child welfare authorities.
- Your call should not be delayed for any reason including the lack of all information or desire to call from home.
- If you are unsure about whether abuse is occurring, you should err on the side of caution and make a call.
- Failure to make the call can result in legal repercussions for you and lifelong repercussions for the child.





Child Abuse doesn't report itself.

Make The Call, Help A Child

1-877 NJ **ABUSE**

1-877-652-2873

