

If a child makes an outcry...

Listen to the child speak but do not ask any questions about the incident. Doing so could influence the child's story, which prevents law enforcement from getting an accurate description of the incident from him/her.

Once you have notified law enforcement and the case has been assigned to a detective for investigation, a forensic interview may be requested for the child with a specially trained interviewer.

Law Enforcement is required to notify CPS of all suspected child abuse/neglect cases. This includes circumstances when children are present during family violence incidents.

After abuse has occurred...

Listen to the child about the abuse. Reassure him/her that telling an adult was the right thing to do and that you will help keep him/her safe.

You may want to let the school know that an incident has happened to your child so they can watch for any changes in your child's behavior or performance at school.

You might want to seek out counseling for your child, and possibly yourself. It is normal for parents to be affected when their child has been abused and counseling can help both of you work through the victimization.

If CPS is contacted regarding your child, it does not mean that your child will definitely be removed from your care. It is best to be open and cooperative with the professionals involved in the case.

Who can help?

The Victim Services Unit within the Travis County Sheriff's Office can provide assistance with information about your case status, Crime Victims' Rights, Crime Victim Compensation, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to appropriate community helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.



Resources

Center for Child Protection

(512) 472-1164

www.centerforchildprotection.org

Child Protective Services

(512) 834-3195, (512) 369-7000, or (512) 927-3300

www.dfps.state.tx.us/

Crime Victims Compensation

1-800-983-9933 or (512) 936-1200

Crimes Against Children

Victim Services Unit

5555 Airport Blvd

Austin, TX 78751

512-854-9709



Name/ID Number:

Direct Number:

Mailing Address:

PO Box 1748

Austin, TX 78767

Crimes Against Children

Children are susceptible to becoming victims of crime because they are less able to care for and defend themselves.

The Texas Penal Code and Texas Family Code respectively address crimes against children and child abuse and neglect.

Examples of crimes against children include:

- Injury to a Child: intentionally or recklessly causing bodily injury, serious mental deficiency, or impairment to a child
- Sexual assault, Aggravated Sexual Assault or Attempted Sexual Assault of a Child
- Other sexual offenses including: Continuous Sexual Abuse, Indecency, Prohibited Sexual Conduct, Solicitation
- Child Abandonment: abandoning a child without providing reasonable and necessary care for the child
- Child endangerment including: placing a child in imminent danger of death, bodily injury, or physical or mental impairment; possession, use or manufacturing of certain controlled substances in the presence of a child; or exposing a child to a controlled substance
- Leaving a young child unattended in a vehicle

Child Maltreatment

While acts of child maltreatment do not always constitute *criminal* offenses, they are very harmful and may lead to serious injury or death. There are four major types of child maltreatment including: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Warning Signs

The following descriptions are not necessarily proof of physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and/or emotional abuse, but they may be clues that a problem exists.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injuries
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument
- Human bites or cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play

- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

Additional risk factors such as family violence or caregiver drug and/or alcohol use may also indicate that child maltreatment is occurring.

How to report...

If you suspect child abuse or a child makes an outcry to you about abuse, you are required by law to report it.

Contact law enforcement AND Child Protective Services.

To Report Abuse or Neglect to CPS:

Call the Abuse Hotline toll-free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide.

1-800-252-5400

For non-emergencies: make a report through the secure web site and receive a response within 24 hours.

www.txabusehotline.org