


DCFS 

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor

Bryan Samuels
Director

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

**Child Abuse
Hot Line**

**800-252-2873
800-358-5117 TTY**

MISSION STATEMENT

Department of Children and Family Services

- The mission of DCFS is to:
 - Protect children who are reported to be abused or neglected and to increase their families' capacity to safely care for them.
 - Provide for the well-being of children in our care.
 - Provide appropriate, permanent families as quickly as possible for those children who cannot safely return home.
 - Support early intervention and child abuse prevention activities.
 - Work in partnership with communities to fulfill this mission.

Child Welfare Laws

- Give DCFS the authority to intervene in families.
- Abused & Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA)(1975)
- The Act creating DCFS
- Child Care Act
- Illinois Juvenile Court Act

Mandated Reporters

Professionals who may work with children in the course of their professional duties. (ANCRA, Sec. 4) are required to report CA/N immediately

- **Medical Personnel:** physician, dentist, LPN, RN, medical social workers, emergency medical technician, nurse practitioner, chiropractor, hospital administrator, psychiatrists,
- **School Personnel:** teacher, principal, school counselor, nurse, social worker, truant officer, psychologist
- **Social Service/Mental Health:** mental health personnel, social workers, psychologist, domestic violence personnel, substance abuse treatment personnel, DHS, DPA, DPH, DC, DCFS

Mandated Reporters

- **Law Enforcement Personnel:** court employees, parole officer, police, ASA, juvenile officer,
- **Coroner/Medical Examiner Personnel**
- **Child Care Personnel:** includes all staff at overnight, day care, pre-school or nursery school facilities, recreational program personnel, foster parents.
- **Members of the Clergy:** include any member of the clergy that has reasonable cause to believe that a child known to him or her in a professional capacity may be an abused child.
- **Privileged Communications**
- **Failure to Report:** License suspension, revocation Class A misdemeanor.

Legal Definitions

- **Abuse:** "inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical injury....(ANCRA, sect. 3)
- **Sexual abuse:** STD, Sexual penetration, exploitation, molestation.
- **Neglect:** caretaker fails to provide....blatant disregard...



Indicators of CA/N		
Type of CA/N	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	<p>Unexplained Bruises & Welts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On face, lips, mouth ■ On torso, back, buttocks, thighs ■ In various stages of healing ■ Clustered, forming regular patterns ■ Reflecting shape of article used to inflict (belt, electric cord, etc) ■ On several different surfaces areas ■ Regularly appear after absence, weekend or vacation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wary of adults contacts ■ Apprehensive when other children cry <p>Behavioral Extremes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aggressiveness, ■ withdrawal ■ Frightened of parents ■ Afraid to go home ■ Reports injury to parents

Indicators of CA/N		
Type of CA/N	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	<p>Unexplained Burns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks ■ Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia) ■ Patterned like electric burner, iron, etc. ■ Rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso 	

Indicators of CA/N		
Type of CA/N	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	<p>Unexplained Fractures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To skull, nose, facial structure ■ In various stages of healing multiple or spiral fractures <p>Unexplained Lacerations or Abrasions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To mouth, lips, gums, eyes ■ To external genitalia 	

Indicators of CA/N		
Type of CA/N	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress ■ Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods ■ Unattended physical problems or medical needs ■ Abandonment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Begging, stealing food ■ Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departure) ■ Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class ■ Alcohol or drug abuse ■ Delinquency ■ States there is no caretaker

Indicators of CA/N		
Type of CA/N	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Sexual Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficulty in walking or sitting ■ Torn, stained or bloody underclothing ■ Pain or itching in genital area ■ Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas ■ Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens ■ Pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Unwilling to change for gym class or participate in physical education class ■ Withdrawal, fantasy, or infantile behavior ■ Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge ■ Poor peer relationships ■ Delinquent or run-away ■ Reports sexual assault by caretaker

Minimum Parenting Standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adequately fed ■ Clothed appropriately for the weather conditions ■ Provided with adequate shelter ■ Protected from severe physical, mental and emotional harm ■ Provided with necessary medical care and education as required by law 	

Professionals who work with children need to know:

- Who must report suspected abuse/neglect of children?
- What happens when a report of CA/N is made?
- Why some cases are accepted for investigation while others are not?
- What legal protections are afforded mandated reporters? Anonymity?

Criteria for a Child Abuse/Neglect report

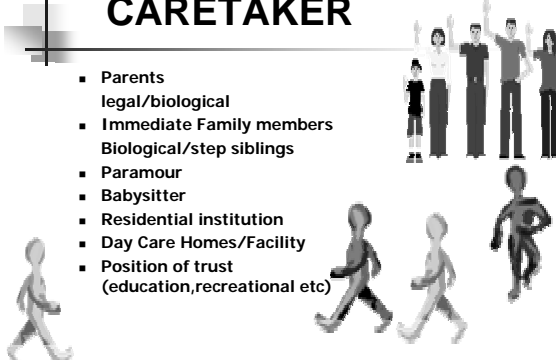
- Reporter must have *reasonable cause to believe* that a child has been abused/neglected
- Victim less than 18 years
- Must have been harmed or at substantial risk of physical injury
- Specific incident abusive or neglect incident as defined by ANCRA

Criteria for a Child Abuse/Neglect report

- Abuse: Alleged perpetrator: parent, immediate family member, resides in home, paramour, caretaker at time of incident.
- Neglect: must be the child's parent or other person w/ responsible for child at time of incident.

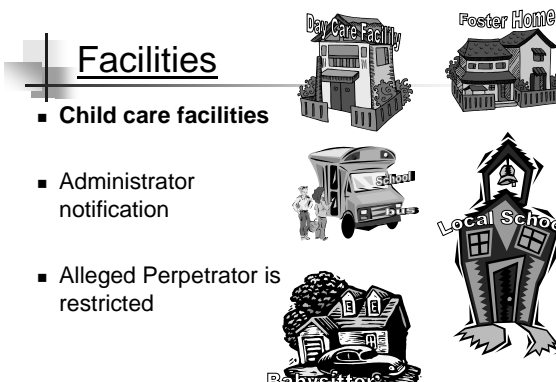
CARETAKER

- Parents
legal/biological
- Immediate Family members
Biological/step siblings
- Paramour
- Babysitter
- Residential institution
- Day Care Homes/Facility
- Position of trust
(education, recreational etc)



Facilities


- Child care facilities
- Administrator notification
- Alleged Perpetrator is restricted



Responding to the Child


- Listen to what the child is telling you.
- Keep your own feelings under control.
- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling you of the abuse.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Try to help the child regain control.
- Do not impose own standards
- Do not lead the child during your interview
- Confidentiality

Reporting





- Names, birth dates (or approximate age(s), races, genders, etc. for all adult and child subjects.
- Addresses for all victims & suspected perpetrator, relationship to child, including current location.
- Information about siblings, other family members
- Specific information about the incident or the circumstances contributing to risk of harm as well as information about who, when where and how and the extent of the injuries and how the child says it happened.

SCR (hotline)



- **If report is taken; report is transmitted via State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)**
- **After Hours: On Call Investigators**



DCFS Investigation

- Identify if abuse/neglect has occurred.
- Identify safety and risk issues.
- Identify service needs and engage family in service provision.
- Provide time-limited service and referrals.

Allegation Based System

- Investigating the report
 - Requirements for initial investigation
 - Who must be interviewed: formal investigation
 - Medical information/consultation needed
 - Law enforcement/ASA involvement or notification
 - Assessment of "factors to be considered" to support case finding
 - Documentation/evidence to support a final finding
 - Notification of findings

INDICATED

- Verify child sustained alleged harm or injury and
- Credible Evidence.. Available facts when viewed in light of surrounding circumstances would cause a reasonable person to believe that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect
- Evidence that the harm or injury is the result of action or inaction of the alleged perpetrator
- Applying the "factors" & determining the harm/injury is significant enough to constitute abuse or neglect under ANCRA
- Retention 5, 20 or 50 years

UNFOUNDED

Unfounding, often a reason for bad feelings between DCFS and Reporting source some reasons can be:

- No credible evidence
- Not a caretaker
- May have been the caretaker acting in self defense
- Already reported investigated
- Have an active case and new reporter is not adding any additional information.

INTENT

- **Was not abuse or neglect (blatant disregard)**
 - Blatant Disregard: incidents where the risk of harm to the child was so imminent & apparent that a parent or caretaker would have exposed the child to such obvious danger without exercising precautionary measures to protect the child from harm.
 - Mitigating Circumstances (divorce/harassment)
 - Services

Protective custody

- DCFS investigator, Medical doctor, Police
- Immediate and urgent danger to the child's life and or welfare *and prove it in court.*
- Must make every reasonable effort to notify child's parents, guardian or legal custodian *and prove it in court*
- Attempt to find suitable relative placement *and prove it in court.*

Goals

- **Safety of the children**
- **Services for the family**
 - Service referrals & linkage
 - Housing assistance
 - Substance abuse assessment & treatment
 - Homemaking assistance & training
 - Parenting education & support
 - Limited financial assistance
 - Mental health & family counseling
 - Day care or respite care
- **Re-unification**

24 HOUR HOT LINE 

1-800-25-ABUSE
1-800-252-2873

(TTY) 1-800-358-5117

 Visit us on the Internet

<http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/>
