

SCUSD #20

Staff Orientation

Reporting Child Abuse

Ms. Thompson

Whose responsibility?

- A report of suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment is a **responsible attempt to protect a child**.
- Arizona law requires certain persons who suspect that a child has received non-accidental injury or has been neglected to **report their concerns** to DCS or local law enforcement (ARS §13-3620.A).

Your responsibility...

- ***YOU may be a child's only advocate*** at the time you report the possibility of abuse or neglect.
- Children often tell a person with whom they feel safe about abuse or neglect. If a child tells you of such experiences, ***act to protect that child*** by calling the toll free Arizona Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445).

What is child abuse and neglect?

- Physical abuse includes ***non-accidental physical injuries*** such as ***bruises, broken bones, burns, cuts*** or other injuries.
- Sexual abuse occurs when sex acts are performed with children. ***Using children in pornography, prostitution*** or other types of sexual activity is also sexual abuse.

What is child abuse and neglect?

- Neglect occurs when children are **not given necessary care for illness or injury**. Neglect also includes **leaving young children unsupervised or alone**, locked in or out of the house, or without adequate clothing, food, or shelter. Allowing **children to live in a very dirty house** which could be a health hazard may also be considered neglect.
- Emotional abuse of a child is evidenced by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or improper aggressive behavior as diagnosed by a medical doctor or psychologist, and caused by the acts or omissions of the parent or caretaker.

What is child abuse and neglect?

- **Exploitation** means use of a child by a parent, guardian or custodian for material gain.
- **Abandonment** means the failure of the parent to provide reasonable support and to maintain regular contact with the child, including providing normal supervision, when such failure is intentional and continues for an indefinite period.

Who must report?

- **Any person who reasonably believes** that a minor is or has been the victim of physical injury, abuse, child abuse, a reportable offense or neglect that appears to have been inflicted on the minor by other than accidental means or that is not explained by the available medical history as being accidental in nature,
- or **who reasonably believes that there has been a denial or deprivation of necessary medical treatment or surgical care or nourishment** with the intent to cause or allow the death of an infant who is protected under A.R.S. § 36-2281,
- shall **immediately report or cause reports to be made of this information to a peace office or to Child Protective Services** in the Department of Economic Security, except if the report concerns a person who does not have care, custody or control of the minor, the report shall be made to a peace office only.

Who must report?

- Any physician, physician's assistant, optometrist, dentist, osteopath, chiropractor, podiatrist, behavioral health professional, nurse, psychologist, counselor or social worker who develops the reasonable belief in the course of treating a patient.
- Any peace officer, member of the clergy, priest or Christian Science practitioner.
- The parent, stepparent or guardian of the minor.
- **School personnel** or domestic violence victim advocates who develop the reasonable belief in the course of their employment.
- Any other person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of the minor.



Who must report?

- *A person making a report or providing information about a child is immune from civil or criminal liability* unless such person has been charged with, or is suspected of, the abuse or neglect in question.
- A person acting with malice who either knowingly and or intentionally makes a **false report** of child abuse and neglect or who coerces another person to make a false report is **guilty of a crime**. A person who knowingly and intentionally **falsely accuses** another of maliciously making a false report of child abuse and neglect is also **guilty of a crime**.

When to report

- *A report should be made when any person, who reasonably believes that a child under 18 has been abused, neglected, exploited or abandoned. A report of suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment is only a **request for an investigation**. The person making the report does not need to prove the abuse. **Investigation and validation of child abuse reports are the responsibilities of child protective service workers**. If additional incidents of abuse occur after the initial report has been made, make another report.*

Accordion Title

- A report can be made to the DCS Statewide Toll-Free Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-767-2445, (1-888-SOS-CHILD) or law enforcement office. When reporting, the following information if known will be requested:
 - ✓ name, age, and gender of child and other family members
 - ✓ address, phone numbers, and/or directions to child's home
 - ✓ parents' place of employment
 - ✓ description of suspected abuse or neglect
 - ✓ current condition of the child



What happens when abuse or neglect is reported?

- While you are reporting abuse or neglect, you will be speaking directly with a skilled social work professional. You will be asked for information about the child, the nature of your concerns, the present location of the child, and about the family with whom the child lives. When Department of Child Safety (DCS) receives an abuse or neglect report that meets the criteria for response, a local DCS specialist is assigned to interview the child's siblings, other children in the home and others who may have information about the child's safety including family, parents, neighbors, teachers, doctors and friends.

What happens when abuse or neglect is reported?

- After all information is gathered, the DCS specialist and a supervisor review the available facts and the next steps to take. A determination of services will be made to reduce the present risk to the child. If a report is warranted it is then assigned to a DCS Field Specialist who then will investigate the report through interviews with all children in the home, parents, friends, relatives, and any other person who may have information about the child and family. After investigation, if DCS has reason to believe that a parent guardian or custodian abused or neglected a child and intends to confirm this, a letter will be sent to the person accused explaining how an appeal of this decision may be requested and how to get a copy of the DCS report.

The Investigation Outcome

- Following investigation, the DCS team determines if the report should be substantiated or unsubstantiated. When a report is substantiated it means that the information gathered supports a finding of child abuse or neglect. CPS may provide services to the family or refer them to services in the local community. When a report is unsubstantiated it means that the information gathered does not support a finding of child abuse or neglect. DCS may end its involvement with the family unless the family requests additional help. A confidential record of all DCS reports and outcomes is maintained in a computer database.

San Carlos Apache Tribe Resources

- Police Department: 475-2311
- Social Services: