



This sheet is intended to provide a reference for mandatory reporters when making a CPS report; the information provided on this tip sheet should not be used to determine whether a report to Child Protective Services should be made. As a reminder, mandatory reporters shall report suspicion of child abuse or child neglect immediately (Code of Virginia, 63.2-1509) and it is not the complainant's task to substantiate the abuse.

## 1 Preparing to make a report:

- a. An adult should speak with the child in a private location, preferably in their native language.
- b. **Gather facts.** What happened? Was there an injury? What is the shape, color, and size of the injury? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who or what caused the injury and what is their relationship to the child?
- c. Information provided should be behaviorally focused, fact-based.
  - **Behaviorally focused:** Be prepared to describe the child's emotional and physical reaction.
  - **Fact-based:** Be prepared to report directly what was shared by the child or directly observed.
- d. Prepare family's demographic information for all known household members (Names, DOB's, addresses, updated phone numbers, language preferences, culture, race, and ethnicity).

## 3 After the report has been made

- The complainant will receive a call from a CPS Hotline staff informing of the screening decision. If the call was screened-in, the assigned CPS Specialist may contact the complainant for additional information regarding the family.
- No further information can be shared about the family unless the family signs a release of information form.
- The complainant will receive a letter acknowledging the closure of the assessment/ investigation at its conclusion.

## 2 Making a report:

Make the report as soon as you learn of the concerns.

Call the hotline at **703-324-7400** or use the online VDSS Mandated Reporter Portal.

Provide a phone number where you can be reached after business hours.

- a. If you use the online portal, data from the mandated reporter portal "transmits" the information to VDSS Hotline staff.
- b. If you call outside of Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. your call will be taken by the State hotline and the local on-call worker may contact you for additional information.
- c. Below are common domains that you will be asked when making a report.

- Details of the facts gathered when speaking with the victim child
- Who last saw child
- Condition of child
- Where child is located now
- Whereabouts of caretaker and/or alleged abuser
- Alleged Abuser/Neglector's Access to Child
- Family Support System
- Condition of Home Environment
- Medical or Mental Health Treatment Needed
- Prior child Maltreatment
- Current or past domestic violence
- Access to weapons
- Current or past Substance Abuse
- Mental or physical disabilities
- Medical diagnoses
- Human trafficking
- Family's military affiliation
- Native American Heritage
- Things that may complicate the family situation
- Things working well in the family (strengths).

CPS hotline number:  
**703-324-7400**

VDSS Mandated Reporter Portal:  
**<https://vacps.dss.virginia.gov/>**