

# Not sure about reporting Child Abuse or Neglect?

It's often really hard to know if a child is being harmed. Sometimes we may see it happening with our own eyes, but other times we may only see signs of what could be happening.

## What are some possible signs that a child may need help?

### Caregiver's Behavior

- ▶ Appearing to be very overwhelmed, threatening physical harm, berating a child, or making hurtful remarks.

### Physical Appearance

- ▶ Any unexplained or concerning bruises, marks, abrasions, welts, or burns on children.
- ▶ Child appears malnourished or unkempt.

### Child's Behavior

- ▶ Changes in mood; sudden lack of engagement.
- ▶ Screaming or crying uncontrollably.
- ▶ Appears to be withdrawn, fearful, or isolated.
- ▶ Use of drugs or alcohol.

### Environment

- ▶ Safety hazards in the home such as exposed wires, cluttered walkways, spoiled food on counter tops and floors, feces, broken or no furniture, hazardous materials that children can access, or infestations of roaches and other insects.
- ▶ Lack of food, inoperable utilities.

### Supervision

- ▶ A child answering the phone or in virtual classroom/activity with no adults or age-appropriate caregiver around.
- ▶ Child appears to be too young to be left alone or developmentally it appears they should not be home alone.

## What if a child discloses harm being done to them or someone else?

- ▶ Listen to what the child has to say.
- ▶ Tell the child you care and want to help.
- ▶ Let the child know he or she is not alone.
- ▶ Let the child know what is happening is not his or her fault.

## Do I have enough information to make a report?

The hotline staff you are reporting to will help determine if there is enough information to proceed. Even if it's not enough info, if additional reports are made for that same child, then sometimes multiple reports can lead to a response.

## How do I make a report?

### What information do I need?

- ▶ Child's name, address and age
- ▶ Parent's name and address
- ▶ Reason for making the report

### What information is helpful?

- ▶ Alleged abuser's name
- ▶ Signs that you've observed or what the child disclosed to you

**If you suspect Child Abuse or Neglect, do not hesitate to call the Fairfax County Child Protective Services Hotline at**

**703-324-7400**

**Our CPS HOTLINE is a HELP Line!**

## If something doesn't look safe, sound safe, or feel safe—Report it!

If a child is in immediate danger or is under the age of 7 and unsupervised, **please call 911** for an immediate response.

For more information, visit **fairfaxcounty.gov** search "report child abuse"



Where a TTY number is not indicated, use 711/Virginia Relay. Reasonable accommodations made upon request



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF  
**FAMILY SERVICES**

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