

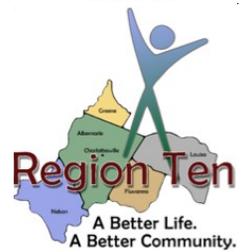
Brought to you by [The Pinwheel Collaborative](#):



FOOTHILLS CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER



PIEDMONT CASA, INC.



Stand Up for Kids!

Information on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect.



April is child abuse prevention month

Dear Community Member,

Thank you for your interest and care for the children in our community. Whether you are a teacher, coach, recreation staff, parent, or work with children in another capacity, you have a crucial role to play in keeping the children in our community safe. Although it can be difficult to accept, child maltreatment is present in all communities, and it cannot be stopped without the support of people like you. You are the first adults our children turn to when they need someone to lean on, and the ones who must take the first step toward protection when there is a safety problem. It is a big responsibility, but also a gift, to be the person with whom a child chooses to share their most guarded secret. We hope that you take this responsibility seriously and educate yourself about how to *Stand up for Kids*. This information booklet is only the beginning; see the last page of this document to find additional resources and phone numbers of people you can consult for additional support. Thank you for all you do for our children.

Sincerely,

The Pinwheel Collaborative

For more information:

To arrange an in-person training for your group, please contact Foothills Child Advocacy Center at (434) 971-7233. Presentations can be customized to your group's needs and interests.

Virginia's Online Mandatory Reporter Training

The Virginia Department of Social Services provides a free online training for any person interested in protecting children. Go to the following webpage and click on Mandated Reporters to view this training and other resources:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index2.cgi>

Stewards of Children Training

Darkness2Light provides this revolutionary program for any responsible adult who cares about the welfare of children. It is also appropriate for youth-serving organizations (sports leagues, day care centers, after school programs, children's clubs, church groups and more). Stewards of Children is available online (http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4d1C1JOkGclSE/b.6243681/k.86C/Child_Sexual_Abuse_Prevention_Training.htm) or taught in person in group sessions. To schedule a free presentation, please contact Foothills Child Advocacy Center at (434) 971-7233 or visit <http://www.foothillscac.org/stewards-of-children.html>

A Guide for Mandated Reporters in Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

A guide from the Virginia Dept. of Social Services. View and download free: http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/cps/intro_page/mandated_reporters/resources_guidance/A_Guide_to_Mandated_Reporters.pdf

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse within Youth-Serving Organizations

This free report from the CDC is designed for representatives of youth-serving organizations who are interested in adopting strategies to prevent child sexual abuse. Whether these strategies are developed within the context of an overall risk management plan or are addressed separately, organizations need to examine how they can protect youth from sexual abuse. Download at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/PreventingChildSexualAbuse-a.pdf>

Stop It Now!

Stop It Now! provides tip sheets and other information for adults invested in preventing and addressing abuse of children. Please visit <http://www.stopitnow.org/> for more information and resources. If you have general questions or concerns about a situation, you can call their helpline at 1.888.PREVENT.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center

NHTRC provides resources and support for victims of human trafficking, which includes both sexual and labor trafficking. Call the hotline at 1-888-373-7888 anytime to report concerns or get more information.

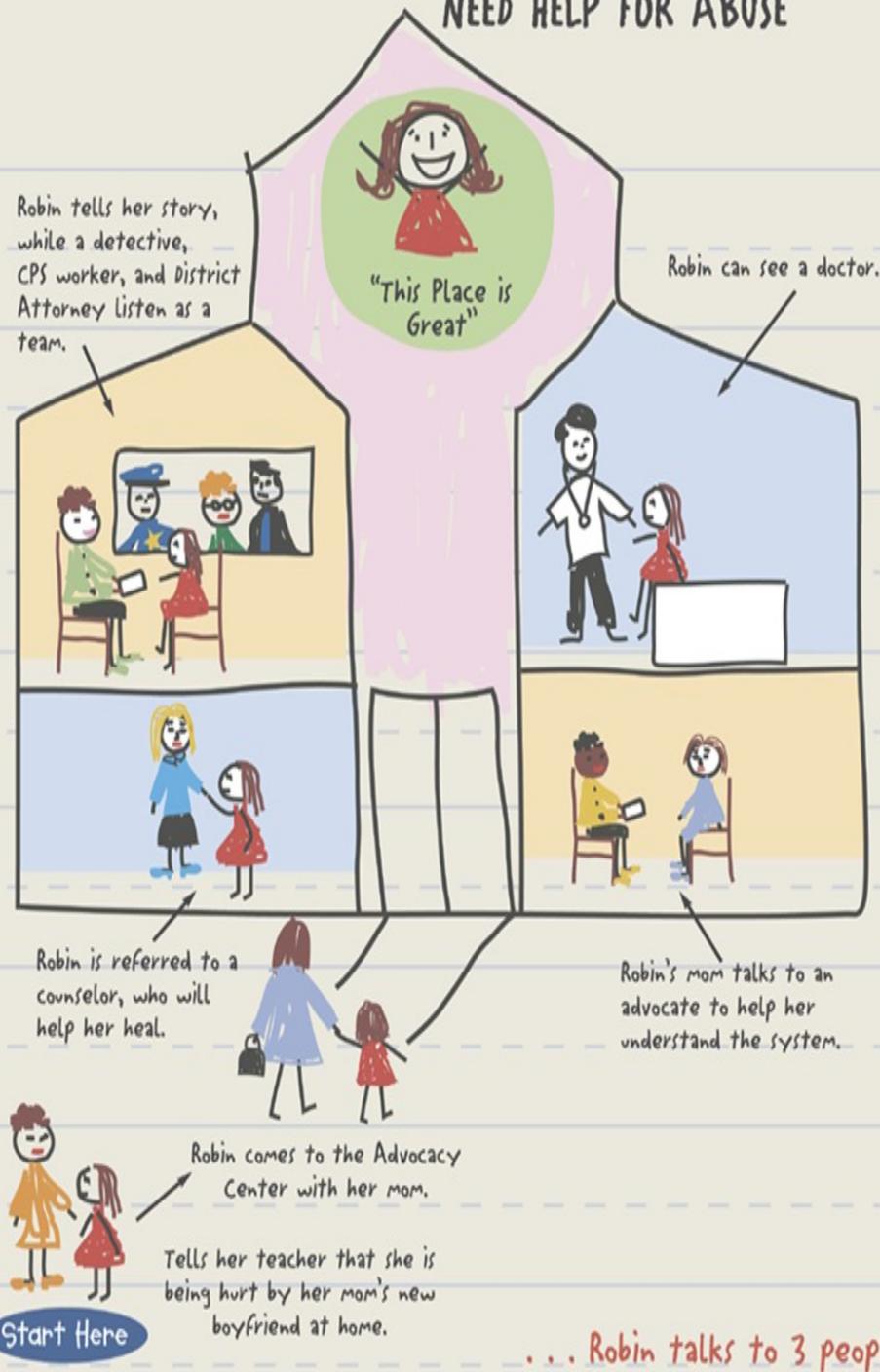
Child Protective Services:

Albemarle County	(434) 972-4010	Louisa County	(540) 967-1320
City of Charlottesville	(434) 970-3400	Madison County	(540) 948-5521
Fluvanna County	(434) 842-8221	Nelson County	(434) 263-7160
Greene County	(434) 985-5246	Orange County	(540) 672-1155

Virginia Hotline 1-800-552-7096

Changing the Child Abuse System

WHAT HAPPENS TODAY WHEN KIDS NEED HELP FOR ABUSE



The Pinwheel Collaborative comprises local child advocacy and protection agencies in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area. The collaborative strives to protect children, prevent abuse, and provide hope. The Pinwheel Collaborative meets monthly. If you would like to be an active member of this group, please contact Safe Schools/Healthy Students Project at (434) 873-4569 or by e-mail at office@safeschoolscville.org. We hope that you will join us in working together to prevent child abuse and neglect and to educate the community about prevention and related issues. Together we can create a world of happy, thriving children.

If you would like to receive The Pinwheel Collaborative newsletter on a quarterly basis, please contact one of the collaborative partners listed on the back of this booklet.

"To the world you may be one person,
but to one person you may be the world."

— Bill Wilson

Virginia recognizes 5 types of child maltreatment:

Physical Abuse

- Hitting, shoving, shaking, burning, or any other action/inaction by a caregiver that results in or is likely to result in injury to a child.

Neglect

- Failure to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, medical care or basic needs (for reasons other than poverty). Also includes knowingly leaving a child with a registered violent sex offender who is not related to the child.

Sexual Abuse

- Fondling, intercourse, oral sex, masturbation, exploitation, voyeurism, or any other sexual act between a child and a caregiver.

Emotional Maltreatment

- Screaming, berating, belittling, intimidating, ridiculing, rejecting, denying reality, harming pets, or any other action or inaction by a caregiver that results in physical or emotional dysfunction in a child. Also includes exposing a child to domestic violence when the violence results in emotional harm to the child.

Substance-Exposed Infant

- When a mother exposes a child to controlled substances in utero.

In order for CPS to investigate an allegation, the child in question must be under 18. However, maltreatment committed by any caregiver, including parents, relatives, child care providers, school staff, recreation staff, or any other person who cares for children, will be investigated by Child Protective Services (CPS). Abuse that is committed by someone who is not in a caretaker position is investigated by the police. Some cases are investigated by both CPS and police. In order for CPS to investigate an allegation, the child in question must be under 18; however, the abuse could have occurred at any time in the child's life - i.e., the abuse does not have to be currently happening to be reported and investigated. However, the sooner maltreatment is investigated, the more likely it is that the child and family will receive appropriate services in order to heal.

- ❖ CPS will arrange for the child to be interviewed about their experiences. This may occur at the Child Advocacy Center, school, home, or other location. CPS does not need to have permission from parents in order to speak with children, so if you are contacted for assistance with gaining access to a child, you should provide the requested information and refrain from notifying parents. CPS will notify the child's caregiver(s) as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- ❖ The Child Protective Services worker will conduct a child safety assessment, determine if abuse or neglect occurred, and assess the level of risk of future harm to the child(ren).
- ❖ When an assessment or investigation is completed, CPS can refer the family for no services, voluntary services, mandated services, ongoing DSS services, court intervention, and/or any other intervention needed to ensure safety for the child(ren). Most families with substantiated concerns receive supportive services of some kind. Only a small percentage of children involved with CPS are removed from the home due to unresolved safety concerns.
- ❖ As the reporter, you have a right to know what happened within the bounds of confidentiality requirements. Child Protective Services can share information with you regarding their actions, as long as it is in the child's best interest and you have a need to know. If you are not contacted by the Child Protective Services worker within 45-60 days of the report and you wish to learn the outcome of the Child Protective Services response, you may call the worker or supervisor involved in the case.

Foothills Child Advocacy Center & the Multidisciplinary Response:

- ❖ Foothills CAC completes forensic interviews for children, provides case management for families, and coordinates multidisciplinary team meetings to ensure that children and their non-offending caregivers receive appropriate support when there is an allegation of serious maltreatment.
- ❖ The multidisciplinary team includes staff from Child Protective Services, law enforcement, Commonwealth's Attorney, Victim/Witness, Child Advocacy Center, medical professionals, mental health organizations, Dept. of Social Services, CASA, and other organizations that work towards child safety & well-being.
- ❖ The multidisciplinary response involves child-serving agencies working together to keep children safe and make the process as comfortable as possible, as illustrated on the next page.

Document everything!

This includes:

- ❖ The basis for your concerns, including physical and behavioral indicators.
- ❖ The child's statement to you as closely as possible, using exact words. If you are unsure, don't make something up.
- ❖ The child's demeanor before, during, and after disclosure.
- ❖ When the report is made to CPS, record the date, time, and the person who took the report. This helps ensure that you can prove that you fulfilled your duty as a mandated reporter.
- ❖ The CPS intake worker will also need demographic information on the child and family. Whether or not you made the original CPS report, if you are contacted by CPS regarding an open investigation on a child with whom you work, you must share any requested information that is needed by CPS to evaluate the allegation.

What happens after I make a report?

- ❖ Federal regulations, the Code of Virginia, and Child Protective Services policy specify that the identity of the reporter is to be protected. Your identity as the reporter will not be shared unless required by a court order, if the information is necessary for a full understanding of the child's situation (this is highly unlikely). *CPS will not tell the caregiver who made the report.* You are also immune from any civil or criminal penalties for making a good-faith CPS report.
- ❖ When a report of suspected child abuse or neglect is made, Child Protective Services must determine if the situation described meets the legal definition of child abuse or neglect and whether Child Protective Services has the legal authority to respond. If the report meets Virginia criteria, Child Protective Services will conduct a family assessment or an investigation. If the allegation involves criminal activity, CPS will share the information with law enforcement.

Physical Abuse Indicators:

- ❖ Bruises on uncommonly injured body surfaces
- ❖ Blunt-instrument marks or burns
- ❖ Human hand marks or bite marks
- ❖ Multiple injuries at different stages of healing
- ❖ Evidence of poor care or failure to thrive
- ❖ Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- ❖ Fear of medical help or examination
- ❖ Self-destructive tendencies
- ❖ Fear of suspected abuser being contacted or fear of going home

Corporal Punishment vs. Physical Abuse

Corporal punishment (spanking) is not illegal in Virginia, but when it results in injury to the child, it is considered abuse and should be reported. Corporal punishment is prohibited in schools.

Neglect Indicators:

- ❖ Hunger or emaciation
- ❖ Lethargic/lack of sleep
- ❖ Noticeably poor hygiene
- ❖ Inappropriate dress for the weather
- ❖ Untreated illness or injuries
- ❖ Risky adolescent behavior
- ❖ Steals or hoards food, money, or other necessary items
- ❖ Promiscuity, drugs, and delinquency
- ❖ No social relationships/shunned by peers
- ❖ Clinging behavior
- ❖ Destructive tendencies

Supervision & Leaving Children Home Alone

Virginia law does not indicate a certain age when children can be left unsupervised. Caregivers must use their best judgment to determine whether a child can be safely left alone. If a supervision situation is resulting in harm or risk of harm to a child, this should be reported to CPS to assess whether the caregiver's actions were neglectful by assessing the child's level of maturity, the child's comfort with the situation, the accessibility of the caregiver, and the overall safety precautions taken by the caregiver.

Emotional Maltreatment Indicators:

- ❖ Non-organic failure to thrive (infants)
- ❖ Speech disorders
- ❖ Stomach aches, head aches or other somatic complaints for no physical reason
- ❖ Physical, mental and/or emotional development is delayed
- ❖ Continual self-devaluation
- ❖ Overreaction to mistakes
- ❖ Extreme fear of any new situation
- ❖ Extreme fear of caregivers being notified of problems or misbehaviors
- ❖ Neurotic behavior (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- ❖ Extreme passivity or aggression
- ❖ Cruelty to animals or people
- ❖ Eating disorders
- ❖ Attempted suicide
- ❖ Self-harmful behavior

Domestic Violence

When children are exposed to physical or serious verbal fighting among adults in the home, it is often harmful to their well-being and development. Concerns about adults fighting in the home should be reported to CPS. Unless the child was physically injured by being in the middle of the fight, these cases will be investigated as a type of emotional abuse. When making these types of reports, it is especially important to share any noted dysfunction displayed by the child in response to the fighting (e.g., expressing fear of particular people, excessive guilt, parentified behaviors, aggression, self-harming thoughts or behaviors, etc.). CPS can only become involved in domestic violence cases when there is a clear indication of harm to the child. However, even when a caregiver is unaware of dysfunction in the child, a report should still be made anytime domestic violence occurs around a child, as CPS may have access to other information about the family that would allow them to offer services to the family.

Don't:

- X Show shock or other strong emotions.
- X Ask leading questions or re-phrase the child's words.
- X Press the child for details or other information they don't want to share.
- X Correct the child if they use slang terms for body parts or functions. Use their language when speaking of the abuse with them.
- X Ask or force the child to show you injuries or body parts under their clothing to verify their disclosure. If the child is complaining of pain or injury, you can send the child to the nurse or trainer for medical care.
- X Make promises you can't keep. Don't tell the child what will happen as a result of their report, other than telling them that you will tell someone whose job it is to help kids.
- X Send the child to another person (guidance counselor, principal, head coach, etc.) to re-tell the disclosure. The child should only have to tell one person until they can be interviewed by a forensic interviewer.
- X Put your personal opinion regarding the truthfulness of the allegation in the child's record.
- X Repeat what the child told you unless there is a clearly defined need for an involved person to know.
- X Speak badly about the alleged offender in front of the child. Many children have very complex emotions about their abuser, and may shut down if you criticize the person. Instead, you can say something like, "I'm sorry that happened to you."
- X Notify the child's parents (including any caregivers who are not alleged to have abused the child) until after consulting with CPS or Law Enforcement. It is rarely appropriate to communicate directly with parents regarding alleged child maltreatment. This is because:
 - ◆ Danger to the child may increase
 - ◆ The child may recant (take back their allegation)
 - ◆ The parent may flee with the child(ren)
 - ◆ Risk of suicide for victim or perpetrator may increase

If a child is talking about possible abuse...

Do:

- ✓ Ask "Tell me what happened?" and other non-leading questions.
- ✓ Keep your emotions under control and remain calm.
- ✓ Listen attentively – give the child your undivided attention.
- ✓ Tell the child that you believe her/him.
- ✓ Reassure the child that it is not his/her fault.
- ✓ Assure the child that what he/she is telling you is very important and that there is someone they can talk to about what happened.
- ✓ Check to see if the child feels safe returning home. (Be sure to use open-ended questions such as "How do you feel about going home today?" instead of leading questions like "Are you scared to go home today?").
- ✓ Tell the child that you will tell someone what they told you so that they can get help with this problem.
- ✓ Document the exact words the child said and how the conversation began. Write it down as soon as you can so that you don't accidentally misquote the child later.
- ✓ Respect the child's right to confidentiality. A child's disclosure of abuse is not water cooler gossip.



protect
children

prevent
abuse



provide
hope

TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE: 1-800-552-7096

Sexual Abuse Indicators:

- ❖ Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, sexually transmitted infections, or pregnancy
- ❖ Regressing in bedwetting or having accidents
- ❖ Nightmares or sleep interruptions
- ❖ Becoming worried about clothing being removed
- ❖ Drawing sexually explicit pictures
- ❖ Sexualized behavior or statements that are more advanced than other children their age
- ❖ PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms such as hypervigilance, panic attacks, and other anxious reactions
- ❖ Signs of sexual exploitation (i.e., receiving money or goods in exchange for sexual activity). These may include:
 - ◆ Having unexplained money or other goods that the child/family cannot afford
 - ◆ Tattoos or brands
 - ◆ History of running away
 - ◆ Gang involvement
 - ◆ Wearing clothing that is inappropriate for the season/activity

What About Sexual Activity or Abuse Between Minors?

Sometimes sexual activity between children can be exploitive and abusive, resulting in the same level of harm that is seen when children are abused by adults. Even if sexual contact between children seems mutual or non-traumatic, children will still benefit from intervention. This will help ensure that none of the children have been perpetrated against by an adult and that they receive appropriate services to stop the behaviors. If one of the minors is in a caregiving role, CPS & law enforcement will investigate. If not, only law enforcement will investigate. CPS can also investigate a suspected lack of supervision on the part of a caregiver that allowed/resulted in sexual contact between minors. Services will be offered to both children involved in sexual contact through a community agency.

Who Is a Mandated Reporter?

In Virginia, the following people are designated as mandated reporters: athletic coaches, directors, or others over 18 employed by or volunteering for athletic organizations; administrators or employees of day camps, youth centers, and youth recreation programs; teachers and school staff; child care staff; medical professionals; social workers; probation officers; mental health professionals; law enforcement officers; animal control officers; mediators; hospital staff; court-appointed special advocates (CASA); any person employed by a public or private institution of higher education; any person 18 or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children; and any person who has received training approved by the Department of Social Services for the purposes of recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. However, **anyone** who is concerned about a child can make a report.

**YOU ARE A MANDATED
REPORTER
1-800-552-7096**

In Virginia, mandated reporters are required by law to make reports of suspected abuse/neglect immediately (no later than 24 hours) after receiving the information that resulted in suspicion of abuse or neglect. **Do not wait for proof.** The law requires you to report as soon as you have “reason to suspect.” Do not investigate the allegation yourself — leave that up to CPS and law enforcement.

What constitutes “suspicion” of maltreatment?

Suspicion of abuse or neglect is based upon indicators such as those listed previously.

Mandated reporters do not need to prove that abuse or neglect occurred before making a report to Child Protective Services. It is appropriate, however, to inquire about suspicious injuries & behaviors in children you work with. (“Tell me what happened.”)

If you make your report to your superior, you are still responsible for ensuring that that person made a report to CPS. The person who made the report is required to notify you of the actions they took. If you are the person that the child originally disclosed to, you may still need to speak with CPS or law enforcement to share what you know.

You are required to report suspicion of maltreatment by any caregiver, including your co-workers. For more information about preventing child abuse in your organization, view the publication *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Within Youth-serving Organizations* (available free from the CDC website).

One of the strongest indicators of abuse is a child’s report. When a child says that he or she has been abused, take the statement seriously. Resolve doubt in favor of the child, and err on the side of protection.

Remember:

How a case is handled from the beginning will affect the outcome of the case. All child-serving organizations should have a protocol on what to do when a child discloses abuse or if abuse is suspected. It *will* happen to a child involved with your organization; it is important to be prepared before you are faced with a child who is in danger.