

# *Circle of Grace*

## Catechist Training

### Important Program “Take-Aways”

(January 4, 2018)

As you may or may not be aware, the U.S. Bishops’ *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* developed in 2002 mandates that each diocese have a safe environment program in place for children and youth. In the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, the program which was previously adopted and has been taught within the context of the CCE curriculum since 2011 was *Sacred and Safe*.

Earlier this year, Cardinal DiNardo requested an evaluation of the *Sacred and Safe* program and has since determined that a new, more updated program is necessary. Implementation of this updated program, called *Circle of Grace*, was mandated for the present 2017-18 catechetical year.

As Cardinal states, the *Circle of Grace* program, “... is centered on helping children and young people understand their own sacredness, the sacredness of others, and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. It also teaches a *culture of respect and faith* that goes beyond mere protection.” It is our goal that with the introduction of this program at St. Laurence over the coming weeks, that we will facilitate this culture of respect and faith by providing our students with the common knowledge, tools and language to do so.

Thank you for your support of the *Circle of Grace* program! It is an essential part of our CCE program and we appreciate your support as we strive to provide the safest environment possible for all of the children of St. Laurence.

### ***Circle of Grace* CCE Lesson Schedule**

(Please be sure to refer to the updated Elementary CCE Lesson Schedule-in your class bins and on-line on the St. Laurence Catechist webpage)

#### *January 16/17/21 (Kinder Sunday)*

**Kindergarten:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 1: What is a Circle of Grace?

**Grade 1:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 1: What is a Circle of Grace? (review) & Lesson 2: The Stoplight

**Grade 2:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 1: What is a Circle of Grace? (review) & Lesson 2: The Stoplight

**Grade 3:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 1: What is a Circle of Grace?

**Grade 4:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson: Internet Smart = Safety

**Grade 5:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson: Media and our Circle of Grace

#### *January 23/24/28 (Kinder Sunday)*

**Kindergarten:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 2: The Stoplight

**Grade 1:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 3: Safety Plan

**Grade 2:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 3: Safety Plan

**Grade 3:** *Circle of Grace* Lesson 2: Boundaries and Limits of our Circle of Grace

## January 30/31/Feb 4 (Kinder Sunday)

Kindergarten: *Circle of Grace Lesson 3: Safety Plan*

Grade 3: *Circle of Grace Lesson 3: Boundaries and Limits of our Circle of Grace*

### Key Points to Remember...

- For a visual on the Circle of Grace 'meditation' please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4OzF7-VtWA>
- The lesson plans provided are 'scripted' and should be followed closely to ensure that all pertinent content is addressed.
- For Elementary Grades 1-5, all of the lessons assume the introduction of the *Circle of Grace* concepts in the *prior* grade level. Since we are introducing this program for the first time this year, a review of the general *Circle of Grace* concepts – i.e. the meditation, prior year's vocabulary, etc. – should be a part of your first lesson for reinforcement and understanding. Recall that we also introduced some of these general concepts in our large gathering time in mid-December.
- In this first year, Grades 4 and 5 will need a more *detailed* review of the COG key concepts, COG logo (i.e. what the colors stand for) and relevant vocabulary from prior years' lessons before you begin to teach the grade-level lesson.
- For Grades 1-3, there is a repetition of the concepts from year to year in the lesson plans as this is the foundational *Circle of Grace* material.
- For each grade-level, an overall listing of supplies necessary, by lesson, has been provided. This outline indicates what materials will be prepared/provided for you by RE Staff and available to you the first day of your COG lessons (i.e. a separate COG basket will be put in your class bin).
- Some lessons provide optional Lesson Extenders, which are at your discretion to implement, time permitting.
- If you finish a lesson in Grades 1-3 (which have multiple lessons over multiple weeks) you are free to preview the next lesson with your class or move into teaching the next COG lesson. Since these lessons fall within our Unit on Morality, we can add material from the textbooks to the last class session in this unit, if necessary. However, **ALL of the COG material, as written, must be covered in class.**
- If a child is uncomfortable participating in any activity (i.e. the 4<sup>th</sup> grade 'telephone' game/activity), do not force the issue. In the alternative, ask for volunteers to play the game.
- In the Grade 3 materials, a *Pre-Assessment* will be provided for each student to be used at the beginning of the first lesson. Again, since this is the first year of introduction of the COG concepts, you students are likely not familiar with this material. This can be used as a small group activity and class discussion starter to segue into the lesson materials.

- **Grade 3, Lesson 2** incorporates an activity using various *'Boundary Scenarios'* where the children work in groups and then you will bring their small group work back to class discussion. Be sure to review these scenarios beforehand, so that you can respond appropriately within the context of the lesson. If you have any questions about what the answers to the activity questions are, please be sure to let us know.
- **For an adaptation of the Grade 4 'Telephone' activity, you will be provided with a *talking stick* in lieu of string.** As each child passes on or surrenders the talking stick to the next student, it reinforces the notion of giving up control over the accuracy of the message that is being relayed. An inference can be made to how stories or conversations on the Internet occur and may not be totally accurate or true.
- **Optional Closing Prayers for your use** (referenced in some of the lessons) (*use internet access through the TV in the classroom*)
  - **Song Videos**
    - *This Is Holy Ground* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTx36JyflOQ>
    - *Prayer for Peace* (David Haas) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cw0gMW6gk0w>

## Child Safety Concerns

We understand that in the course of presenting the *Circle of Grace* Safe Environment lessons to your class sometimes children may reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled *outside* of the group/classroom environment. This may range from information which is concerning but does not threaten the immediate safety of the child, to clear indications of abuse where the immediate safety of the child is of the utmost concern. In either case, it is information which should be shared with and documented by the program Coordinator/Director, so that appropriate action can be taken where necessary.

**If this happens in the classroom setting, tell the child, "Thank you for sharing that, \_\_\_\_\_. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (i.e. at the end of class, at the break, etc.)."** When this happens, contact the program Coordinator/Director for assistance in speaking with the child. **Remember that the recipient of any such information is the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.**

**While we do not anticipate having information of a reportable nature being shared by any of our students, please be sure to prepare yourself for the 'what if' scenario by thoroughly reviewing and understanding the enclosed *Quick Reference Card for Leaders/Catechists*.** In particular, be sure to review the suggestions on the action steps to take if something of a potentially reportable nature is shared and also on how to react to a child who may come forth with such information. It is important that we practice our 'game face' *before* we have any such encounter with a child in our care.

If you have any questions and/or concerns, please be sure to let us know. We are here to support you as you teach these lessons to your students. Thank you for helping us build a culture of respect and faith at St. Laurence!

# REPORTING GUIDELINES



# PROMISE to Protect

# Pledge to HEAL

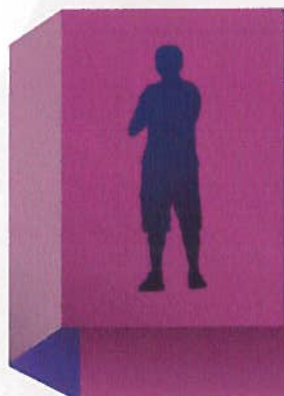


We train everyone to prevent and report abuse.

**2,400,627** adults trained  
**4,484,609** children trained

**195 U.S. dioceses/eparchies** have a victim assistance coordinator to obtain assistance and provide support for those abused.

We provide outreach to those abused.

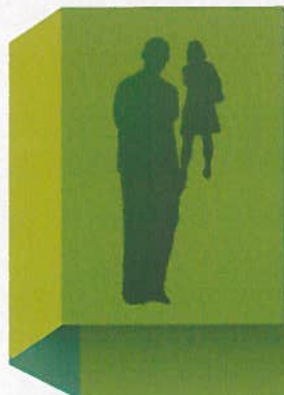


We require background checks.

**2,390,956** background checks for clerics, employees and volunteers

**100% of U.S. dioceses/eparchies** require allegations of sexual abuse to be reported to public authorities.

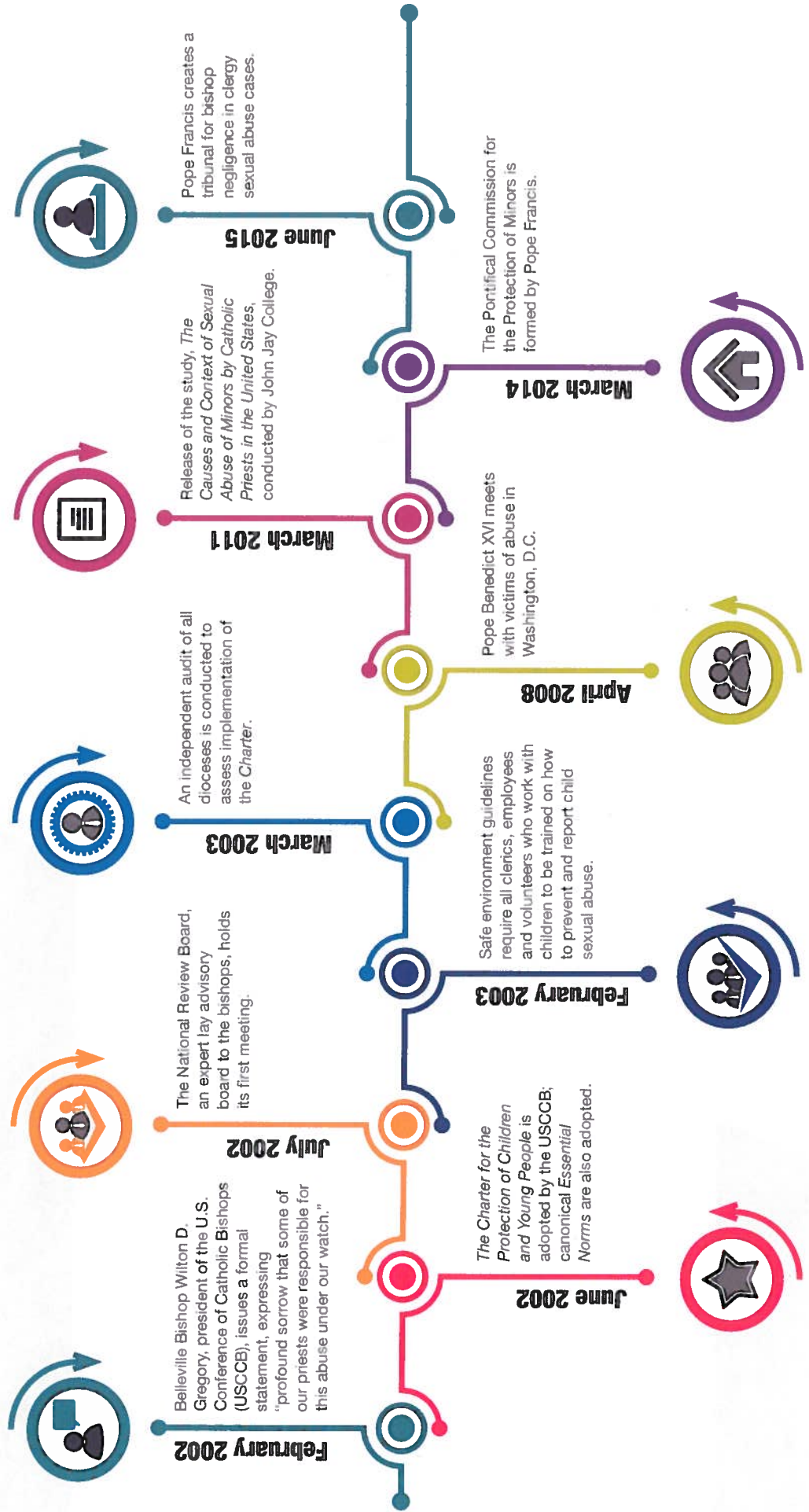
We report all allegations.



We work with law enforcement.



# Key milestones in STRENGTHENING CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION within the Church



*Circle of Grace*  
**Safe Environment Program**  
**Quick Reference Card for Leaders/Catechists**

We understand that in the course of presenting the *Circle of Grace* Safe Environment lessons to your class sometimes children may reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled *outside* of the group/classroom environment. This may range from information which is concerning but does not threaten the immediate safety of the child, to clear indications of abuse where the immediate safety of the child is of the utmost concern. In either case, it is information which should be shared with and documented by the program Coordinator/Director, so that appropriate action can be taken where necessary.

If this happens in the classroom setting, tell the child, "Thank you for sharing that, \_\_\_\_\_. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (i.e. at the end of class, at the break, etc.)." When this happens, contact the program Coordinator/Director for assistance in speaking with the child. **Remember that the recipient of any such information is the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.**

***It's the Law:***

Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, or that a child has died of abuse or neglect **MUST** report his or her suspicions to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or local or state enforcement agency. In reporting sexual abuse, the law does not make distinction between a youth or an adult nor child on child abuse.

**Who Must Report:** Any Person

**Basis for Report:** Having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect.

**When to report:** IMMEDIATELY- A report must be made orally within 48 hours after there is cause to believe/suspect that the child has been or may be abused or neglected.

**Penalty:** Failure to report is a Class B misdemeanor. Knowingly or intentionally making a false report is a Class A misdemeanor.

***According to Archdiocesan policy, reasonable suspicion of abuse is required to be reported by the individual with the suspicion, to either local (police) or state (CPS) agencies and then to the organization staff. These are non-emergency contacts.***

***Observers of abuse actually taking place are required to call local police by emergency contact, 911 and then to the organization staff.***

Please use the following guidelines below to assist you in knowing what action steps should be taken regarding sensitive situations arising in the context of your classroom presentations...

- A** Be Attentive to comments and behaviors during class.
- C** Contact the RE Director/Coordinator/Administrator prior to the dismissal of class if comments or behaviors are concerning.



- T** Team approach is always best. Collaborate with your director/coordinator/administrator to help clarify child's statement/behavior and to determine if there is a need to report to the authorities.
- I** Initial Report to the authorities may be needed. The **child abuse hotline number is 800.252.5400** (Child Protective Services of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services).
- O** Other Resources are available through the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. The **Safe Environment Coordinator, Jeannie Nelson, Director, can be reached at 713.652.4499.**
- N** Note all observations/statements and actions taken, make a file.

### **Some guidelines to keep in mind when speaking to children about possible issues of neglect or abuse...**



ChildSafe®

When children decide to tell an adult they have been abused, they are usually worried about what will happen. An adult's reaction to a child's disclosure is very important. Children need to know that breaking the silence about abuse is the right thing to do.

If a child's disclosure is handled with support and care, the child can learn to feel safe again. In addition, taking action and reporting the abuse is critical to protecting the child and possibly other children.

#### **WHAT TO SAY — AND NOT SAY**

1. **Practice** your response *before* the situation arises.
2. **Believe the child.** Children rarely lie about abuse.
3. **Ensure privacy.** Speak to the child in a private setting, away from others, and give the child all of your attention.
4. **Sit eye-level with the child.** Hovering or standing over a child is a position of power and may intimidate the child.
5. **Tell the child he or she has done nothing wrong.** "It's not your fault." Praise the child's courage for telling you.
6. **Stay calm.** Ask only a few open-ended questions, such as "What happened?" Let the child use his or her own words to tell the story.
7. **Limit your questioning.** Children frequently share the details of their abuse only once. Don't interrogate the child; he or she will have to tell the "whole story" to the authorities after a report. It's important that a specially trained interviewer receive the answers to their questions so a formal investigation won't be hindered.



8. **Avoid showing feelings of shock or horror to the child.** The child may feel guilty or ashamed. Share your feelings with a friend or professional.
9. **Don't correct.** Don't correct a child's words about what happened or the names they use for body parts.
10. **Do not criticize the child, the family or the abuser.** This may frighten or confuse the child. Many children still care about the abuser, but want the abuse to stop.
11. **Thank the child for talking to you.** Tell them "What happened is not your fault," and that you are proud they had the courage to tell. Acknowledge their feelings and their fears, however, different they may be from your own feelings. (They may still love the abuser!)
12. **Tell the child your plan** — who you are going to call and what you are going to do. But **DON'T make promises you can't keep.**

#### **WHAT TO DO — AND NOT DO**

1. **Record.** Write down the words the child uses in the disclosure. Accuracy is important.
2. **Report.** You do not need "proof" to report abuse. Reports of suspected abuse or neglect should be made to Child Protective Services or local law enforcement.
3. **Don't judge.** If you are skeptical, don't express doubt to the child, or make your own conclusion about the validity of a disclosure. This is the responsibility of investigators.
4. **Don't suggest that the child might have been abused.** This may impair the investigation.
5. **Keep it confidential.** Do not discuss the allegations with anyone, including co-workers and relatives. This betrays the child, and may jeopardize an investigation.
6. **Ensure the child's safety.** When appropriate, ask the child if he or she feels safe going home. A parent who is non-supportive or non-believing may be unable to protect the child, or the child may fear punishment for revealing the abuse. Do not inform the parent, if it may endanger the child. If the child does not feel safe or you are concerned for the child's safety, call Child Protective Services immediately.

Excerpted from: <http://www.childsafe-sa.org/resources/>

**ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON  
POLICY FOR REPORTING  
SUSPECTED ABUSE OF A MINOR**

*“A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report...” (Texas Family Code § 261.101)*

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**TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OF A MINOR (person under 18 years of age)  
BY AN UNKNOWN PERPETRATOR**

- Contact **Child Protective Services (CPS)** of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services **800.252.5400** or **Local Police Department**
- 

**TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OF A MINOR (person under 18 years of age)  
BY A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY**

- Contact **Child Protective Services (CPS)** of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services **800.252.5400** or **Local Police Department**

**AND**

- **Sr. Maureen O'Connell**, Victims' Assistance Coordinator, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Post Office Box 907, Houston, Texas 77001, **713-654-5799** (**confidential voice mail**)
- 

**TO REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OF A MINOR (person under 18 years of age)  
BY AN EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE**

- Contact **Child Protective Services (CPS)** of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services **1.800.252.5400** or **Local Police Department**

**AND**

- **Honorable Frank Rynd**, General Counsel, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Post Office Box 907, Houston, Texas 77001, **713-652-8278**



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

## WHEN YOU SUSPECT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

### *A General Guide*

Attorney General of Texas  
Ken Paxton

#### YOUR LEGAL obligation

Anyone "having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect" MUST report the case immediately to a state or local law enforcement agency or the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS).

#### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS for professionals

Current law requires that professionals such as teachers, doctors, nurses, or child daycare workers must make a verbal report within 48 hours. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$2,000 (Texas Family Code, Chapter 261).

Reporting suspected child abuse to your principal, school counselor or superintendent will NOT satisfy your obligation under this law. Local school district policy cannot conflict with or supercede the state law requiring you to report child abuse to a law enforcement agency or TDPRS.

TDPRS has toll-free, 24-hour Family Violence Hotline:  
(800) 252-5400

#### YOUR LEGAL PROTECTION

Your report of child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in "good faith" and "without malice."

- "GOOD FAITH" means that the person making the report took reasonable steps to learn facts that were readily available and at hand.
- "WITHOUT MALICE" means that the person did not intend to injure or violate the rights of another person.

Provided these two conditions are met, you will also be immune from liability if you are asked to participate in any judicial proceedings that might result from your report.

#### IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A CHILD IS ABUSED....

DON'T confront the abuser. DO report your reasonable suspicions

Even if your report does not bring decisive action, it may help establish a pattern that will eventually be clear enough to help the child.

The signs of abuse described below don't by themselves necessarily indicate abuse. You might talk to the child a little to see if there is a simple or innocent explanation for what you have observed. However, it is not up to you to determine whether your suspicions are true or not. A trained investigator will evaluate the child's situation.

#### YOU SHOULD SUSPECT physical abuse

When you see...

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes or burns, especially when the child cannot adequately explain their causes
- Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern that may indicate the use of an instrument or a human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Aggressive, disruptive and destructive behavior
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Passive, withdrawn, emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after the child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothes hiding injuries to arms or legs

## YOU SHOULD SUSPECT

### neglect

When you see...

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness, torn and/or dirty clothes
- Obvious fatigue and listlessness
- A child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care or other medical attention
- Stealing or begging for food
- Frequent absence or tardiness from school

## YOU SHOULD SUSPECT

### sexual abuse

When you see...

- Physical signs of sexually-transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Frequent expressions of sexual activity between adults and children
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults, especially of a particular gender
- Sexually suggestive, age inappropriate or promiscuous behavior
- Knowledge about sexual relations beyond what is appropriate for the child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children
- Complaints of painful urination

## A DISCLOSURE

If you are the first person the child tells about sexual abuse, your testimony as "outray witness" may be especially important in future legal proceedings.

What you say the child told you is not considered hearsay, but is admissible evidence in a trial involving a sexual offense against a child. This exception applies only to the first person the child approaches.

## YOU ARE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE for the safety of your own child

Sometimes abusers are close relatives, but the fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. If you permit your child to be in a situation where he

or she may be injured, then you may be prosecuted for child abuse.

If you are frightened for your own safety and that of your child, call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

If you are uneasy about your own behavior toward your child, you can call the Parents Anonymous toll-free hotline at 1-800-554-2323.

You are legally responsible for the care of your child. You must provide your child with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or else you must arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

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Office of the Attorney General  
P.O. Box 12198  
Austin, Texas 78711-2198

(800) 983-9933 Statewide  
(512) 936-1200 in Austin  
(512) 936-1800 Fax

[www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us)

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## CRIME VICTIM services division

The Crime Victim Services Division consists of four sections: The Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services Program, the Grant and Contract Management Section, the Statewide Automated Victim Notification Program and the Crime Victims' Compensation Program.

## CRIME VICTIMS' Compensation

Victims of child abuse and their families may be eligible for reimbursement of certain out-of-pocket expenses related to the crime. Please check our Web site or call for information and an application form.



A PROGRAM AND SERVICE OF  
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.

**VIRTUS**<sup>®</sup>Online

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### Protecting God's Children for Adults

## Mandated Reporters and Reporting Child Maltreatment

By [Robert Hugh Farley, M.S.](#)

### Introduction

National media reports have recently addressed the failure of individuals, institutions, and organizations that serve youth to report suspected child abuse. Following a child's disclosure of abuse or when one suspects that a child is or has been maltreated, how should one go about making a child abuse report, and who is required by law to make a report?

### Background

Incidents of child maltreatment exist in a variety of forms:

- Child neglect
- Physical child abuse
- Child abuse homicide
- Sexual child abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Emotional or psychological abuse

Child maltreatment reporting laws vary from state by state. Some states designate specific individuals who are required to make child maltreatment reports. Other states designate that members of certain professions are mandated by law to report child maltreatment. In Oklahoma, state law designates ANY person who has reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected, or is in danger of being abused or neglected, must report the suspicion of abuse. These "designated persons" are commonly referred to as mandated reporters.

In 1963, Idaho became the first state to require mandated reporting of child abuse to the child welfare authorities. The early state child abuse reporting laws focused heavily on the medical profession



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### Robert Hugh Farley, M.S.

As a highly decorated police detective, Deputy United States Marshal, and currently as an international child sexual exploitation prevention consultant for INTERPOL, Robert Hugh Farley has spent the last 30 years protecting children from killers, physical abusers, molesters and sexual predators. He has trained tens of thousands of police officers, federal agents, child protection workers, attorneys, medical personnel, and other professionals and conducted hundreds of training seminars. Robert

treating suspected serious physical abuse. It wasn't until the 1970s that incidents of sexual abuse required mandated reporting.

The circumstances under which a mandated reporter must make a report vary from state to state. Typically, a report must be made when the reporter, in his or her official capacity, suspects or has reason(s) to believe that a child has been abused or neglected. Another standard frequently used is whether the non-professional reporter has knowledge of conditions that one would reasonably believe could result in harm to the child. A child is defined as being a person less than 18 years of age.

### **CAPTA**

In 1974, Congress enacted the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA in an effort to bring uniformity to the nation's child welfare system. The CAPTA legislation mandated that:

Every state must have a Child Protective Service or CPS agency

Every state must have statutes that define child maltreatment

Every state must articulate how CPS will take reports and/or respond to child maltreatment

Recently, CAPTA and most states have expanded the definition of child maltreatment to include children born with and affected by illegal substances or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

If the suspected maltreatment involves a parent or a caretaker situation, one typically must make a report to the local Child Protective Service or CPS agency. In some States these agencies are called:

Department of Children and Family Services or DCFS

Department of Family and Children Services or DFCS

Department of Children and Family or DCF

Department of Human Services or DHS.

If one goes to the VIRTUS Homepage ([www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org)) and then tabs down on the left to the "Other resources—Reporting Child Abuse" link, one will find the CPS contact information for all fifty of the United States. In addition, the specific child abuse statutes for each state are available.

### **The Role of CPS**

Many CPS agencies maintain a centralized toll-free telephone number or "Hotline" that operates 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The CPS agency also will retain a database of prior child maltreatment reports. CPS is responsible for immediately screening, evaluating, and classifying all reports of suspected child maltreatment or imminent risk. If the report contains enough information to warrant an investigation, many CPS and the local law enforcement agency will attempt to coordinate their activities by conducting a joint multi-disciplinary team or MDT investigation. The results of the investigation should determine whether child maltreatment has occurred and if so, who is responsible. As part of the CPS component of the investigation, CPS will assess the potential for further risk to the victim and siblings and finally offer follow-up services to the family.

### **Information for Making the Report**

has been a consultant, author and trainer for the VIRTUS programs since 2003. In July 1997, Robert created the Child Exploitation Unit through the Cook County Sheriff's Police. This specialized unit was the first police unit, in the United States, to deal specifically with proactively combating the online Internet solicitation and molestation of children. Under Robert's leadership, the program has grown to become one of the most successful law enforcement organizations of its kind, and to date has a 100 percent conviction rate. Its activities have received frequent publicity on nightly television, as well as in the national and international press. Prior to creating this Unit, Robert served as one of the founding members of the Federal Child Exploitation Strike Force in Chicago. From 1988 to 1997 he conducted hundreds of undercover child pornography, child exploitation and child prostitution investigations, to successfully target child sexual predators in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana. As an internationally known child abuse expert, Robert has co-authored books while also serving as a senior instructor for the child abuse training programs of the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJDP, the FBI, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and INTERPOL. His training curriculum and child abuse investigative techniques have been implemented by hundreds of prosecutors, police departments, probation departments, child protection agencies and advocacy centers across the world. Robert utilizes his extensive experience to evaluate and determine risk factors for youth groups, schools, organizations, agencies,

Some states designate CPS as the agency that accepts reports of suspected child abuse, while other states designate the local law enforcement agency. Some states designate both CPS and local law enforcement as the agencies to be notified of suspected child maltreatment.

When one is making a suspected child maltreatment report, one should provide as much of the following information as possible without questioning the child:

Names and addresses of the child, the parents, caregiver(s) or the person with whom the child is living

Child's age, birth date and gender

Names and ages of the siblings

Nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect

Approximate date, time and the location where the injury, maltreatment or neglect occurred

The circumstances in which the injuries, maltreatment or neglect became known to the reporter

Previous injury, maltreatment or neglect of the child or siblings

Name and address of the person suspected to have caused the injury, maltreatment or neglect and the relationship with the child

Any action taken to treat or help the child

Any other information the reporter believes would be helpful

### Good Faith - Immunity

A concern often expressed is whether one who reports suspected child abuse might be sued. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway, all of the States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands provide some form of immunity from liability for persons who, in good faith, report suspected instances of child abuse or neglect under the reporting laws. Immunity statutes are designed to protect reporters from civil or criminal liability. This protection is extended to both mandatory and voluntary reporters.

### Conclusion

If a child has actually disclosed being abused, one should always tell the child that you believe the child and that you are going to contact some people who can help them. When speaking with the child, try not to display horror, shock, or voice any disapproval of the situation. Because the child will be required to tell their story, in detail, to investigating professionals, one does not need to press the child for any specifics. Remember, one only needs to suspect child maltreatment in order to make a report to the proper authorities.

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**1) Reporting laws in every state require designated adults to report to authorities "suspected" child abuse or neglect. What constitutes a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect?**

- A)  A disclosure from a child of alleged abuse or neglect even without corroborating evidence
- B)  Observations of unexplained injuries to a child even without independent evidence of abuse

and congregations. Through diagnosis, psychological evaluations, management tools, policy development, employee training, and security risk environmental factors, Robert develops an individualized approach to avoiding potential child maltreatment. In addition, he assists in the supervision of internal investigations by providing comprehensive on-site analysis of existing situations and procedures, and by serving as a liaison with local law enforcement officials. Robert holds a master of science degree in criminal justice and corrections and a bachelor's degree in education—both from Chicago State University, in Chicago, Illinois.