

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

TEXAS FAMILY CODE 261.101



DEFINITIONS

- **What is Abuse?**
- Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.
- **What is Neglect?**
- Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.



PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT...

- Teacher,
- Custodian,
- Cafeteria manager,
- Bus driver,
- Office staff member,
- Nurse,
- Administrators, and
- Counselors
- In other words... YOU!



Texas Family Code 261.101,
Persons required to report; time to
report



REPORT TIMELINE

A report must be made within:

48 hours



after the professional first suspects a child has been or may be abused.



REMINDER

Do NOT delegate or rely on another person to make the report!



LEGAL INFORMATION

- A person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigations of child abuse or neglect is IMMUNE from civil or criminal liability.
- The name of the person acting in good faith who reports or assists in the investigations of child abuse or neglect will remain anonymous.
- Failure to report child abuse or neglect is a Class B Misdemeanor (Confinement in jail not to exceed 180 days; Fine not to exceed \$1,500; or confinement and fine)



FROM THE DFPS WEBSITE

- **Will the person know I've reported him or her?**
- Your report is confidential and is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential.
- **What if I'm not sure?**
- If you have reason to suspect child abuse, but are not positive, make the report. If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you on whether the signs you have observed are abuse.



HOW TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

- Call Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Hotline at 1-800-252-5400
- Website = non emergency www.txabusehotline.org/
- Phone hotline = emergency (1-800-252-5400)
- Please advise the Campus Administrator or Campus Counselor if you suspect the student is in immediate danger
- Please advise the Campus Counselor if you believe the child needs follow up counseling services



PHYSICAL ABUSE WARNING SIGNS

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior



MORE PHYSICAL ABUSE WARNING SIGNS

- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents; injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs



NEGLECT WARNING SIGNS

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school



SEXUAL ABUSE WARNING SIGNS

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted disease
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in young girl
- Difficulty in sitting and walking



REPORT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

- Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
- Website : www.txabusehotline.org/

