



When a Child Discloses Abuse

If a child tells you he/she is being abused you should:

- Try to remain calm do not express shock, panic or disbelief.
- Find a private place to talk.
- Be a listener not an investigator – encourage the child to talk in his/her language and ask just enough questions to act protectively. Say, “Can you tell me more about that?” Do not conduct any form of interview with the child.
- Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling you.
- Stress that what has happened is not his/her fault. Say, “You are not in trouble” and, “If I look or sound upset it is because adults want children to feel safe”
- Check your tone of voice and help the child make sense of what you are feeling. Say, “I am feeling concerned for you. What can we do right now is talk about ways to help you feel safer.”
- Act protectively. Say, “You know some people do wrong things. It is up to grown-ups to protect children. Every child has a right to be safe; we have laws in Alabama to help protect children.”
- Do not make promises you can't keep. (For example, promising you will not tell anyone, as you need to tell someone in order to get help for the child.)
- Contact the Madison County Department of Human Resources (DHR) and/or the police and state that you need to report child abuse. You may remain anonymous.
- Do not contact the abuser, regardless of who that person is, leave this to DHR and/or the police.

IF YOU ARE REPORTING CHILD ABUSE IN MADISON COUNTY, ALABAMA PLEASE CALL MADISON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES: 256-427- 6200.

IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE OF MADISON COUNTY, ALABAMA PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#) FOR CHILD ABUSE REPORTING INFORMATION.

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