



When a Child Discloses Abuse in Madison County, AL Information for Mandatory Reporters

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.)
- Inform your supervisor immediately to develop a plan of action in accordance with school/organization policy and protocols. But remember: according to the mandated reporting law, YOU are responsible to make the report.
- If the alleged offender is a staff member, alert your supervisor for referral to the appropriate authorities.
- As a concerned community member you can also contact the Madison County Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the police and ask how best to respond to the situation at this point.
- Do not contact the abuser, regardless of who that person is, leave this to DHR and/or the police.
- It is advisable not to contact the parent until the plan of action has been developed in conjunction with DHR and/or the police.
- If a parent tells you that a child has been abused, but the abuser no longer has contact with the child, you should still contact DHR and/or the police in order to protect other children.
- You can also provide information to the parent about where they can get help/advice.
- Keep information confidential. Only those who absolutely need to know should be told at this point.

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

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