

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE (2015-2016)

I, _____, am aware of my duty and responsibility as a professional person to report to the central abuse registry any suspected child abuse or neglect which I may uncover in my professional work with parents and/or children. I am also aware that any suspected abuse by a caretaker of the child must also be reported to a local law enforcement agency.

Florida Statutes Chapter 39 states that any person who has knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected **must** report that information to the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-92-ABUSE). By law, failure to report suspicions of child abuse, abandonment or neglect is a third degree felony, as is interfering with or preventing another person from making a report. Knowingly making a false report is a third degree felony. ALL FLORIDA CITIZENS ARE MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

The state of Florida recognizes five types of child maltreatment:

- * **Neglect** – chronic failure of a caretaker to provide basic needs
- * **Physical** – non-accidental injury of a child at the hands of their caregiver
- * **Sexual Abuse** – sexual exploitation of a child by an older and/or more powerful person that may or may not involve physical contact
- * **Emotional Abuse** – pattern of behavior that attack's a child's emotional and psychological development
- * **Abandonment** – willful rejection of parental obligation to a child. (Florida Safe Haven Laws permit a custodial parent to safely surrender their newborn infant less than 7 days of age to a Florida Safe Haven: Emergency Medical Services station, fire station, or hospital.)

If there is immediate danger to a child, call 911.

Anytime that a child makes a disclosure of abuse or exhibits behavioral or physical indicators that have no other reasonable explanation, a report should be made as soon as possible. The report must be made to the abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE). Hotline counselors are available to receive calls 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Remember, a report is simply a request for an investigation, not an accusation.

What rights do I have as a reporter?

1) Confidentiality

The name of any person reporting child abuse, abandonment, or neglect may not be released to any person other than the employees in the department responsible for child protective services, the abuse hotline, law enforcement, the child protection team, or appropriate state attorney, without the written consent of the persons reporting.

2) Immunity from Liability

3) Freedom from Reprisal

I have gone online to www.flsenate.gov/statutes/ and have read the sections in the chapters indicated: 39.201 -39.206 (reporting child abuse) and 415.1034 (adult protective services) regarding mandatory reporting of abuse and neglect. As a reporter, I understand that I am immune from liability.

Signature

Date

Witness:
