

Support & Referrals

If you encounter a child or family who could benefit from support services, consider referring that family to community-based programs in your area.

If possible, a “warm hand-off” is always better than a simple referral; this means that you assist the family with outreach to the resources and supports, guiding them through the process.

Find more resources:

<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

OCFS HEARS Family Line

(Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure and Support)

1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277)

Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities.

For more information about OCFS, please visit our website at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov>

For resources and more information for mandated reporters:
<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

The Mandated Reporter Hotline for child abuse and maltreatment reports:
1 (800) 635-1522



Mandated Reporting



GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES





Definitions

PROFESSIONAL ROLE

means that you are working or volunteering in a role that requires a specific licensure or certification.

For example, if a physician conducting an exam of a child develops a reasonable suspicion of abuse or maltreatment, they must report their concerns to the Statewide Central Register (SCR).

If they are riding their bike after work and see something that they suspect is child abuse/maltreatment, they may call the SCR as a member of the general public, but are not required by law to call the SCR because they were not in their professional role when they observed the situation.

REASONABLE CAUSE TO SUSPECT

occurs when what you have observed or been told, combined with your professional experience or training, leads you to reasonably believe that a child has been or is being maltreated/abused.

A reasonable suspicion does not require concrete proof. One indicator or several indicators in combination may give you a reasonable suspicion.

For example, explanations of injuries that are inconsistent with your training or experience may give you a reasonable suspicion.

When to Report

It is important to understand when you are legally obligated to make a report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and when it is more appropriate to connect the family to community supports.

Remember: just because you disagree with a parent's decisions or actions does not mean a child is being abuse or maltreated.

As a mandated reporter you are required by law to call the SCR when:

- In your **professional role**,
- you develop a **reasonable cause to suspect**
- a **child is being maltreated or abused by a parent or person legally responsible for the child.**

Supporting Families

A report to the SCR is one tool to keep children safe and should only be used by mandated reporters when they are legally obligated to make a report. In your professional role, you are also likely to encounter families whose needs would be met by a wide variety of community-based services.

For more information on what services are available in your community, visit <http://nysmandatedreporter.org> or contact the OCFS HEARS Family Line at 1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277).
