



## USYVL Child Abuse Reporting Guidelines

**Introduction:** The mechanics of child abuse reporting are governed by state law. The following information is a general description of the reporting process. You should be familiar with the reporting laws of your specific state. We have them listed in our forms library to assist you.

**Definition:** The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Public Law 93-247) defines child abuse and neglect as the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment

- Of a child (a person under age 18, unless the state law in which the child resides specifies a younger age for cases not involving sexual abuse)
- By a person (including employees of a residential facility or any staff person providing out-of-home care) who is responsible for the welfare of the child
- Under circumstances which indicate that the child's health and welfare is harmed or threatened

**Who Reports:** In most states, the following individuals are included as legally mandated reporters: teachers, law enforcement personnel, childcare custodians, and health practitioners. Each state has made its own determination as to who is a legally mandated reporter, and in some states, a volunteer is a mandated reporter.

Most state laws have a general clause stipulating that anyone who knows or suspects abuse, should file a report. At USYVL, we believe we are either legally required as a mandated reporter or morally obligated to file a report of suspected abuse.

**To Whom Do You Report:** We have a list by USYVL Program and County of telephone numbers to call if you suspect abuse. This is listed in our Forms library and is also available upon request. We also require that you report any suspected abuse to the National office within 24 hours of incident.

**Reporting Suspected Child Abuse:** The following information is required when making the telephone report of suspected child abuse to the child protective agency:

- Name of the child.
- Present location of the child.
- Nature and extent of the injury.
- Any other information, including that which led the person to suspect child abuse, requested by the child protective agency.

**Immunity For Good Faith Reporting:** All persons who, acting in good faith, make a report, or otherwise provide information or assistance in connection with a report, investigation, or legal intervention pursuant to a report, shall be immune from civil and criminal liability arising out of such actions. Immunity shall not be accorded to persons acting in bad faith.

**Anonymous Reporting:** Mandated reporters are required to give their names. Non-mandated reporters may report anonymously. Child protective agencies are required to keep the mandated reporter's name confidential, unless a court orders the information disclosed.

**Liability:** Legally mandated reporters can be criminally liable for failing to report suspected abuse. The penalty for this misdemeanor is up to six months in county jail, a fine of not more than \$1,000 or both. Mandated reporters can also be civilly liable for failure to report.

**Notification Regarding Abuse:** You are **not** legally required to notify the parents that you are making a report; however, it is often beneficial to let the parents know you are reporting for benefit of a future relationship.