

Abuse Report Procedures for Volunteers

Adapted from Volunteer Training Manual, Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, 2008
with their permission.

"Child abuse, according to Missouri law, is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child's care, custody, and control. If you observe or overhear something, or if a child tells you something that is in any way related to abuse, immediately find your supervisor or someone in charge, so that the situation can be properly documented and the necessary steps can be taken to ensure the child's safety. Your supervisor will decide if it should be reported and who should be contacted."

Do's and Don'ts upon receiving a disclosure of abuse:

DO

- Practice your response before you are in a real situation.
- Pay attention to your body language. Give the child signals that you are hearing what he/she says.
- Choose your words carefully.
- Let the child know that it was brave to share something (no matter how minimal) about a difficult subject.
- Thank the child for telling and change the subject (redirect the child).
- Relay the disclosure to your supervisor word-for-word exactly as the child stated.

DO NOT

- Do not act shocked, horrified, scared, etc.
- Do not tell the child that you will keep the information a secret. Some kids will ask you to promise that you won't tell anyone. Explain to the child that you cannot keep the information a secret because it is not okay for anyone to hurt them and that you need to tell the appropriate persons so that the child can be safe.
- Do not try to determine for yourself if abuse or neglect occurred. This is the role of child welfare services and the police.
- Do not attempt to find out details of the abuse.
- Do not question the child in any way.
- Do not share this information with friends, relatives, or anyone besides your supervisor.

Missouri Division of Family Services

Child Abuse Hotline

(800) 392-3738

Vicar General – Msgr. Robert Murphy

Victim Advocate – Leslie Guillot

(800) 246-1850

(816) 756-1850

Catholic Charities Counseling Solutions

(816) 333-2040

(800) 875-4377 (KC)

(888) 629-2886 (St. Joseph)

(888) 626-4245 (Warrensburg)