

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Who is a mandatory reporter in Nebraska / Iowa?

The State of Nebraska considers ANYONE and EVERYONE who observes or suspects a child is being abused or neglected is a mandatory reporter.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

Nebraska Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-652-1999

Iowa Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-362-2178

Lincoln: 402-471-9272

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands

Director of Match Support, Katie Shanmugam: 402-905-3339

Nebraska Child Abuse Law

Nebraska State Statute 28-707 / 28-710

A person commits child abuse if he or she knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causes or permits a minor child to be:

1. Placed in a situation that endangers his/her life or physical or mental health
2. Cruelly confined or cruelly punished
3. Deprived of necessary
 - Food
 - Clothing
 - Shelter
 - Care
4. Left unattended in a motor vehicle if minor child is six years or younger
5. Sexually abused
6. Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in
 - Prostitution
 - Debauchery
 - Public Indecency
 - Obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions

Why do some people not report to CPS?

- Little training
- Identification with the family
- Fear of reprisal
- Reluctance to interfere
- Perception that treatment failed / "lost cause"
- Results from prior CPS reports
- Fear of being wrong

How to Appropriately Respond to Child Abuse

Initial response

- Do not over-react: Be calm, do not rush to an emotional state, and remember you have the full support of the agency.
- Offer encouragement: Let your Little know that you are proud of them for talking about this with you. Utilize "I statements." Let them know they are free to continue talking.

Example: "Wow. That took a lot of courage to tell me that. I'm glad that you value our friendship as much as I do."

If asked for immediate advice or guidance: Do not feel obligated to answer immediately. Ask if they will allow you a little bit of time to think things over and talk about it later, but give them a specific time frame.

Don'ts:

- We must be sure to not confuse the child or alter the story.
- Do not pressure for information or ask leading questions.
- Do not ask "why" it occurred (infers blame) or judge their behaviors.
- Do not first contact the Parent/Guardian (reports must go directly to CPS or BBBS).

Minimal Facts Questions

CPS will expect you to have gathered these basic facts:

- "What happened?" "When did it happen?" "Who did it?" "When is the next time you will see them?"
- Let them know they are safe with you and assess their current level of safety.

Talking with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands

- If you feel you need to talk with a staff member before calling CPS, please call us. We can offer emotional support and guidance.
- You will need to be the reporter to CPS. We cannot call CPS for you. We will help you gather the needed information to call CPS.

Talking with Child Protective Services

- They will want to know names, birthdays, addresses, family details, match history, etc.
- They will want "the story:" what happened, who said what, who observed what, etc.
- If you do call CPS, you will need to notify us immediately.