



Reporting child abuse and neglect

INFORMATION FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

CFCA Resource Sheet — October 2021



If you require assistance or if you would like to talk to a trained professional about the issues described in this resource sheet, please call [Kids Helpline](tel:1800551800) on 1800 55 1800 or [Lifeline](tel:131114) on 13 11 14. If you believe a child is in immediate danger call the Police on 000.

Overview

This resource sheet provides information to service providers and practitioners working in the child, family and community welfare sector on how to report suspected child abuse and neglect. It defines child abuse and neglect, and provides contact details for the reporting authority in each state and territory.

Introduction

In Australia, state and territory governments are responsible for receiving reports of suspected child abuse and neglect from members of the public. Reporting child abuse and neglect is a community-wide responsibility. Anyone who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person¹ is at risk of being abused and/or neglected should report it to the reporting authority in their state or territory.

Certain groups of people are required by law to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child or young person to government authorities. Further information and guidelines regarding mandatory reporting can be found in the CFCA Resource Sheet: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

¹ In Australia, a child is defined as any human under the age of 18 years (AIHW, 2018).



If a child or young person has disclosed abuse or neglect to you, it is important to stay calm and reassure them that you will help them to be safe. For information on how to respond to disclosures of abuse, see the CFCA Practitioner Resource: [Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosures of Abuse](#) and CFCA webinar: [Responding to disclosures of child abuse and neglect](#).

Parents and other family members may disclose to you concerns about not coping with their parenting responsibilities. Listening and providing support and practical help is important, while assessing whether there is a child at risk of abuse or neglect. Contact details and links to helplines and telephone counselling services that provide information, counselling support and service referral can be found in the CFCA Resource Sheet: [Helplines, Telephone and Online Counselling Services for Children, Young People and Adults](#).

Defining child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse) (CFCA, 2018).

Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into five subtypes:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- exposure to family violence.

For further information, see the CFCA Resource Sheet: [What is Child Abuse and Neglect?](#).

Contact details for each state and territory

The tables below include the contact details of the reporting authority in each Australian state and territory:

- [Australian Capital Territory](#)
- [New South Wales](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Western Australia](#)

Please note that **you do not need to be absolutely certain** that there has been abuse or neglect of a child or young person to contact these authorities. If you suspect a child is at risk of harm, you should call the authority to discuss your concerns, and they will decide whether an investigation is required.

In each state and territory, **all serious concerns should be reported by phone** rather than online or via email. Serious concerns include when you suspect a child or young person is in imminent or immediate danger of serious harm, serious injury or chronic neglect.



Australian Capital Territory

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Child and Youth Protection Services	<p>Child and Youth Protection Services are responsible for facilitating coordination across government for the care and protection of children and young people in the Australian Capital Territory.</p> <p>If you are concerned about a child and want further information on mandatory reporting, refer to Keeping Children and Young People Safe.</p>	<p>Phone: General public Ph: 1300 556 729 (24 hours) Mandated reporters Ph: 1300 556 728 (24 hours)</p> <p>Online: For less serious concerns, complete an online child concern report.</p> <p>Email: For less serious concerns, contact Child Protection Reports.</p>

New South Wales

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Department of Communities and Justice	<p>The Department of Communities and Justice is responsible for handling reports of child abuse and neglect in New South Wales. Information about the process of reporting child welfare concerns can be found on the department's Reporting a Child at Risk webpage.</p> <p>For information about mandatory reporting, refer to the Mandatory reporters webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Protection Helpline Ph: 13 21 11 (24 hours) (TTY/voice calls: 133 677; Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727; SMS: 0423 677 767)</p> <p>Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can use eReporting.</p>

Northern Territory

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Territory Families, Housing and Communities	<p>In the Northern Territory, every person is required to report suspected child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>For further information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in the Northern Territory, refer to the Report Child Abuse page of the department's website.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Abuse Hotline Ph: 1800 700 250 (24 hours)</p>

Queensland

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs	<p>Child Safety is the lead child protection agency in Queensland. For information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in Queensland, refer to the Protecting Children webpage of the department's website.</p> <p>For more information about mandatory reporting, refer to the Mandatory Reporting in Queensland webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: For a list of contact numbers during business hours, go to: Regional Intake Services or call the Child Protection General Enquiries line Ph: 1800 811 810 Child Safety After Hours Service Centre Ph: 1800 177 135</p>



South Australia

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Department for Child Protection	<p>The Department for Child Protection works to keep South Australia's children safe by protecting them from abuse and neglect.</p> <p>For information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in South Australia, refer to the department's Report Child Abuse webpage.</p> <p>The Department for Child Protection provides additional information for mandatory reporting, including Mandated Notifiers and Their Role and Preparing to Report Child Abuse.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Abuse Report Line Ph: 13 14 78 (24 hours)</p> <p>Online: Less serious concerns can also be reported online.</p>

Tasmania

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Department of Communities Tasmania	<p>The role of the Child Safety Service is to protect children and young people who are at risk of abuse and neglect in Tasmania.</p> <p>For information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare in Tasmania, refer to the department's Child Safety Service webpage.</p> <p>Information about mandatory reporting and making a notification can be found on the department's Child safety notifications webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: Child Safety Service 1800 000 123 (24 hours)</p> <p>Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can report online.</p>

Victoria

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	<p>The Child Protection Service is specifically targeted to those children and young people at risk of significant harm in Victoria.</p> <p>For information about child protection and mandatory reporting requirements in Victoria, refer to the department's Child Protection webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: For a list of regional and metropolitan phone numbers: Child Protection Contacts</p> <p>After hours child protection emergency service Ph: 13 12 78</p>

Western Australia

Reporting authority	Further services/information	Contact details
Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support	<p>The Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support offers a range of services to support children and families in Western Australia.</p> <p>For further information about the process of reporting concerns about a child's welfare, refer to the department's If You are Concerned About a Child webpage.</p> <p>Information about mandatory reporting in Western Australia can be found on the department's mandatory reporting information webpage.</p>	<p>Phone: Central Intake Team Ph: 1800 273 889</p> <p>After hours Ph: (08) 9223 1111 or Country Freecall: 1800 199 008</p> <p>Online: Mandatory reporters with less serious concerns can use the department's secure Mandatory Reporting Web System.</p>



References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2018). *Child protection Australia 2016–2017* (Vol. cat. no. CWS 63). Canberra: AIHW.

Child Family Community Australia (CFCA). (2018). *What is child abuse and neglect?* (CFCA Resource Sheet). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved from aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-child-abuse-and-neglect

Authors and acknowledgements

This resource sheet was updated by Claire Farrugia, who at the time of writing was a Senior Research Officer with the Child Family Community Australia information exchange at the Australian Institute of Family Studies.



Our information sheets are regularly updated – please check our website to ensure you are accessing the most current version.

The Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) information exchange is an information and advisory unit based at the Australian Institute of Family Studies, and funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. The CFCA information exchange collects, produces and distributes resources and engages in information exchange activities that help to protect children, support families and strengthen communities.

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