



## Report your concerns

**Contact Children's Services  
anonymously  
403.297.2995**

**Child Abuse Hotline  
1.800.387.5437**

- » It is your legal duty to report suspected child abuse. You do not need proof, just a reasonable suspicion.
- » You do not need permission to report, nor can anyone prevent you from calling.
- » The report should come from the person who receives the information first hand, not a third party.
- » All calls are important. Your piece of the puzzle could tip the scales for a response.



## Suspect Child Abuse? Here's what you need to know

Individuals in the community who are faced with a child abuse situation are legally required to report it to the authorities.

It is critical that adults recognize and respond when a child needs help.



**calgary & area child advocacy centre**

400, 3820 – 24 Avenue NW, Calgary, AB T3B 2X9  
403.428.5300



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## What is child abuse?

Abuse, also called maltreatment, is the act of emotionally, sexually or physically hurting a child. It includes depriving a child of affection and acceptance, neglecting to meet their day-to-day needs or endangering them in any way. Maltreatment also includes sexual exploitation and exposing a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour.

## Recognizing the signs of child abuse

Children may display physical or emotional signs of maltreatment. Signs may include:

- » sudden changes in behaviour or performance
- » unexplained physical injuries or injuries that don't match the child's explanation
- » extreme behavioural reactions such as aggression or withdrawal
- » sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond their stage of development
- » does not want to be at home or runs away
- » always hungry, sick or not suitably dressed for the conditions

## Be aware of your initial reaction

A child may come to a trusted adult because they believe you can help. It is common to feel panic, fear, hopelessness, disbelief, anger or sadness. It is important to set aside personal feelings and stay calm. Initial reactions are critical for the child's path to healing.

## Listen. Believe.

- » Allow the child to do most of the talking. Disclosures rarely come in clear statements. If you need more understanding about the context, use an open-ended question or phrase such as "Tell me more."
- » Do not investigate for details once you suspect abuse.
- » Reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do.
- » Explain to the child that you will need to tell someone who can help them. You cannot keep it a secret.

## Document any comments verbatim

This includes those made by the child, parent, caregiver or anyone else relevant to the situation.

