

Mandated Reporting

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Mandated reporting is the legal requirement of an individual, due to his or her profession, to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. This is intended to help prevent and promptly end such maltreatment. The definition of a mandated reporter varies per state; generally, his or her occupation involves interacting with children. Examples of such professions include teachers, health care providers, social workers, law enforcers, mental health professionals, and child care providers. In a broader definition of this is that any adult who has any interaction with a child who suspects neglect or abuse is suspected has a responsibility (at least morally, if not legally) to report their suspicions.

For instance, a psychologist has been observing bruises on his 12-year-old client's upper arms, legs, and face. The boy did not want to disclose how he got the bruises. The psychologist asked about his family and finds out that he was living with an uncle who often gets drunk at night. With this information, the mental health practitioner has reasonable cause to suspect that his client may be suffering from both neglect and abuse. He then calls Child Protective Services to make an official oral report.