

## Optimizing Potential In 4-H Youth Development



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# Child Abuse Awareness

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### Introduction

- Child abuse is a serious problem.
- In fiscal 2002, 70 children in Indiana died from abuse or neglect.
- Are at risk of becoming abusers themselves.

### We Must Do Our Part

- Everyone has a moral, civic, and legal duty to help prevent child abuse.
- 4-H Youth volunteers who work with children over long periods of time may notice changes that signal concern.
- Indiana law requires that anyone with knowledge about child abuse should report it to the authorities

### What is Child Abuse?

- Indiana code 31-34-1 defines it as:  
“...The child’s physical or mental health is seriously endangered due to injury by the act or omission of the child’s parent, guardian, or custodian”.

- A layman’s definition is:  
Any non-accidental injury caused by a child’s caretaker

### Child Abuse Definitions

#### Physical abuse:

- Any non-accidental physical injury caused by the parent or caregiver.
- A serious injury as a result of a caregiver’s failure to take action to prevent it.

#### Neglect:

- Failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision.

#### Sexual abuse

- Any physical contact with a child for sexual gratification.

### Who Should Report Abuse Or Neglect?

- Any individual who suspects it.
- Anyone failing to report commits a Class B misdemeanor.
- Staff and Extension volunteers have “double duty” to report: First on their own behalf, and second they must immediately notify Extension educator in

charge of the program, who also has duty to report

- Anonymous reports are accepted

### **How to Report**

- Report to Child Protective Services  
24-hour/ 7-day-a-week hotline  
1-800-800-5556
- Local number for Child Protective Services in every county

\_\_\_\_\_ County's Number

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### **When Making a Report**

- Provide identifying information:
  - Child's name.
  - Age of child.
  - Address and phone number.
- When describing a situation:
  - Remain calm.
  - Provide dates, eyewitness accounts, and direct observations.

### **Confidentiality is Key in Child Abuse**

- If abuse is suspected:
  - Report case to Child Protective Services.
  - Notify county Extension educator in charge of program
    - Educator will notify CES administration.
- Do not discuss situation with others

### **Determining Child Abuse**

- Never black and white.
- Often unclear whether or not to report.
- When questions arise seek advice from county educators.
- Always err on the side of the child.