involvement has resulted in family tragedies in which neighbors reported they knew what was going on, but decided not to report the maltreatment. Members of the community who are not required to report may make the report anonymously.

To report suspected child abuse and neglect, contact your local:

Police or Sheriff's Department;
County Welfare Department;
County Juvenile Probation Department (if designated by the county to receive mandated reports).

After Your Report

Many people are under the misconception that if a family member is reported for child abuse and neglect the parent will always be arrested and the child will be taken away from the family. Although this may occur in serous abuse cases, the family is usually referred to services such as counseling or parenting classes. The goal of child protective services is to try to keep the family together unless the child is in imminent danger. We all share the goal of protecting our children.

Resources for Children with Disabilities

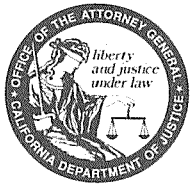
International Coalition on Abuse and Disability
Abuse and Disability Project
6-102 Education North
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2G5 Canada
(403) 492-1142
www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/icad

ARC-Riverside CAN Do! Project
Child Abuse and Neglect Disability Outreach
8138 Mar Vista Court
Riverside, CA 92504
(310) 473-6768
www.disability-abuse.com/cando

For more information on child abuse and other crime prevention material, write:

Crime and Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General's Office
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

http://www.safestate.org



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Abuse of Children with Disabilities

Crime and Violence Prevention Center
California Attorney General's Office

Bill Lockyer
Attorney General

It Should Not Hurt To Be A Child

A child with a disability is at greater risk for experiencing all types of abuse. Children may acquire serious and chronic disabilities through abuse and then become even more vulnerable. National research studies have found that abuse and neglect among children with disabilities occurs at between 2-4 times the rate of children without disabilities. Information about abuse of children with disabilities is not familiar to many in the lay and professional community, which may leave these children more vulnerable to abuse. The signs of abuse they display may be ignored or mistakenly attributed to the disability. Children can be abused in their own homes, residential treatment programs, specialized services clinics and by transportation providers.

What is Child Abuse

Child abuse and neglect is legally defined as:

1) a physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person,
2) sexual abuse, including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation,
3) willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child,
4) neglect, including both general and severe neglect,
5) abuse (all of the above) in out-of-home care.

Indicators of Child Abuse

Emotional and behavioral signs of abuse in children with disabilities may or may not differ from children without disabilities due to differences in the way they function. Physical signs are the same, yet some children with disabilities bruise or fracture easily, so care must be taken to understand the disability when assessing abuse. Below are some indicators of child abuse which can help in recognizing an existing or potential problem of abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may be defined as any act which results in a non-accidental physical injury.

- Bruises, burns, abrasions, lacerations or swelling caused by other than accidental means.
- Belt buckle marks, hand prints, bite marks and pinches.
- Injury unusual for a specific age group.
- A history of previous or recurrent injuries.
- Unexplained injuries, conflicting explanations or reasons for injury.

Neglect

Neglect is essentially the negligent treatment of a child by parent or care provider under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare.

- Child lacking adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision.
- Child is always sleepy or hungry.
- Conditions in the home are extremely or persistently unsafe or unsanitary.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as acts of sexual assault on and the sexual exploitation of minors.

- Child reports sexual activities to a trusted person.
- Detailed and age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior (especially by younger children).
- The child has a sexually transmitted disease.

Myths About Children with Disabilities and Child Abuse

Children with disabilities:

- are **not** at risk for abuse because no one would abuse a child who has a disability;
- are safe from abuse because they are always with familiar and trustworthy people;
- who have mental retardation do not understand what is happening, so abuse does not bother them;
- do not feel physical or emotional pain as do other children.

Reporting

The law requires certain professionals to report suspicion and/or knowledge of child abuse. Parents and other community members also have an important role in protecting children from abuse and neglect. The life of a child may be saved if people become involved and report cases of child maltreatment. Fear of