

Texas law requires anyone with knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect to report it to the appropriate authorities. This mandatory reporting applies to all individuals and is not limited to teachers or health care professionals. The report may be made to any local or state law enforcement agency or the [Department of Family and Protective Services \(DFPS\)](#). If you suspect child maltreatment, report your suspicions by calling the Texas Abuse Hotline, available at all times, nationwide at 1-800-252-5400. Reports made by phone can be made anonymously if the reporter prefers. Reports can also be made online at www.txabusehotline.org or by fax at 1-800-647-7410. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

General Frequently Asked Questions about Reporting Abuse

DEFINITION OF CHILD AND ADULT:

TEXAS CONSTITUTION AND STATUTES - FAMILY CODE Sec. 101.003. CHILD OR MINOR; ADULT. (a) "Child" or "minor" means a person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes. (c) "Adult" means a person who is not a child.

Do I have a duty to report a person who is no longer a minor?

The term "child" in the phrase "a child that has been abused or neglected" is ambiguous and raises the question of whether under subsection 261.101(b) the professional's duty to report includes only an at-present child or extends to an individual who is now an adult but was a child when abused.

Under subsection 261.101(b) of the Family Code, a professional is not required to report abuse or neglect that the professional believes occurred during an adult patient's childhood. (Office of Attorney General Opinion No. GA-0944)

Will the person know I've reported him or her?

Your report is confidential, and it is not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides for immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as your report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential. Individuals who are licensed or certified by the state or who work for an agency or facility licensed or certified by the state and have contact with children as a result of their normal duties, such as teachers, nurses, doctors and day-care employees, must report the abuse or neglect within 48 hours.

There are three specific circumstances under which DFPS is **required** to release a reporter's identity. DFPS must release your identity as a "reporter" to:

1. Law enforcement *as part of a criminal investigation*;
2. The court *if instructed to do so under court order*; or
3. Another state agency *if the matter you are reporting falls under their jurisdiction*.

A reporter's identity will only be disclosed if one of the above scenarios applies. Please note that DFPS is required to notify law enforcement in writing of all reports of child abuse or neglect. However, the reporter's identity and contact information is **not** disclosed during these routine notifications.

What if I'm not positive abuse has occurred?

If you have reason to suspect abuse, but are not positive, make the report. If you have any doubts about whether or not it is abuse, call the hotline at 1-800-252-5400. They can advise you on whether the signs you have observed are abuse.

What will I be asked?

Information helpful to have on hand when filing an abuse report (if known) includes:

- Name, age, and address of the child or person 65 years or older or an adult with disabilities
- Your name and contact information
- Brief description of the situation and the child or vulnerable adult
- Current injuries, medical problems, or behavioral problems
- For a child: Parents' names and names of siblings in the home
- For an adult: Names of relatives in or outside the home and name of perpetrator
- Explain how you know about the situation

Report using online reporting at (<https://www.txabusehotline.org>)