

Office of Children's Services

Reporting Child Maltreatment

Safe Children, Strong Families

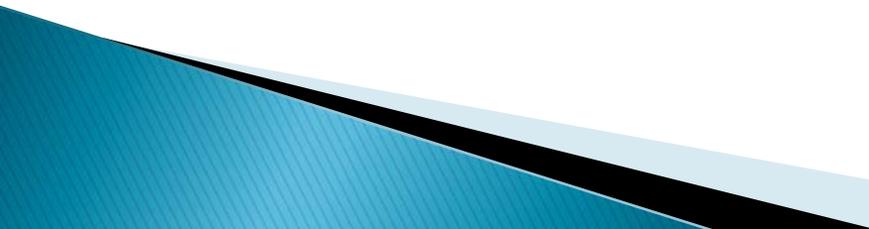
- ▶ Mission Statement: The Office of Children's Services works in partnership with families and communities to support the well-being of Alaska's children and youth. Services will enhance families' capacities to give their children a healthy start, to provide them with safe and permanent homes, to maintain cultural connections and to help them realize their potential.
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Reporting Child Maltreatment

- ▶ State law – AS 47.17.020 requires that persons who are mandatory reporters who, in the performance of their appointed duties, have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm as a result of child abuse or neglect, shall immediately report the harm.
- ▶ AS 47.17.290 defines "reasonable cause to suspect" as "based on all the facts and circumstances known to the person, that would lead a reasonable person to believe that something might be the case."

Persons Required to Report

- ▶ Practitioners of the healing arts;
 - ▶ School teachers and school administrative staff members of public and private schools
 - ▶ Peace officers and officers of the Department of Corrections
 - ▶ Administrative officers of institutions
 - ▶ Child care providers
 - ▶ Paid employees of domestic violence and sexual assault programs; crisis intervention programs
 - ▶ Paid employees of counseling/treatment alcohol and drug programs
 - ▶ Members of a child fatality team
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For more information...

See OCS website – Children’s Justice Task Force

- ▶ <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/ChildrensJustice/MandatoryReporting.htm>
- ▶ 47.17.027 – Duties of School Officials

What is Child Maltreatment?

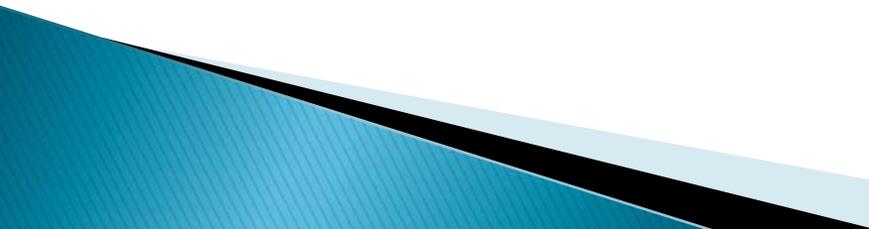
- ▶ State Law defines child abuse or neglect to include the following actions by those responsible for a child's welfare:
 - Physical injury (non-accidental) that harms or threatens a child's health or welfare;
 - Failure to care for a child including neglect of the necessary physical (food, shelter, clothing and medical attention), emotion, mental and social needs;
 - Sexual abuse, including molestation or incest;
 - Sexual exploitation, including permitting or encouraging prostitution
 - Mental injury



How Do I Report Suspected Abuse?

- ▶ If you suspect abuse or neglect, here are the steps you should follow to make a report:
 - Contact the Office of Children's Services
 - Or if in the case of an emergency, contact Law Enforcement:
 - Municipal Area – Local Police Department
 - Outside Municipal Area – Alaska State Troopers
 - Villages – VPSOs and VPOs, and the Troopers covering your village.

OCS Regional Intake Hotlines

- ▶ Beginning November 1st each of the 4 regions in OCS (ARO, SCRO, SERO & NRO) will have their own hotline 1-800 numbers to make new reports of child maltreatment
 - ▶ Will assist small offices in better managing workload and enhance customer service to reporters
 - ▶ Will standardize the process of screening reported allegations similarly across the state
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Needed Information

- ▶ Family Demographics, including tribal affiliation
 - ▶ Suspected maltreatment
 - ▶ Circumstances surrounding maltreatment
 - ▶ Child functioning
 - ▶ Adult functioning
 - ▶ Parenting practices
 - ▶ Disciplinary practices
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Additional questions

- ▶ Any actions taken by reporter
 - ▶ Were police contacted
 - ▶ Child believed to be in immediate danger
 - ▶ Known extended family members names and contact information
 - ▶ Known connections to community providers
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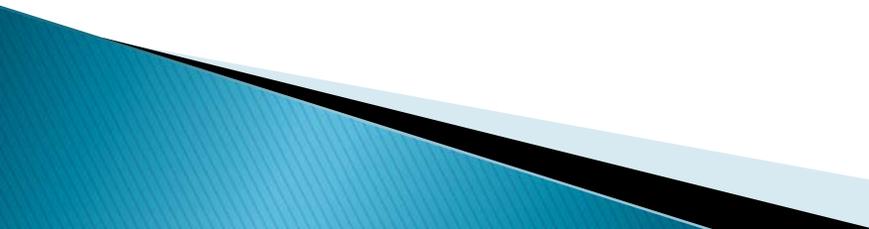
What happens after report is made?

- ▶ OCS receives your information and makes determination of whether reported information meets screening criteria – screens in or out
- ▶ If screened in...it is assigned for initial assessment
- ▶ The OCS assessment includes face to face contact with the child, parent(s), caretaker(s) siblings and others residing in the household or who have information that will help inform the assessment of child safety
- ▶ OCS will only open a case for ongoing family services if the child is determined to be unsafe or at high risk

Mandated reporters

- ▶ As per AS 47.10.093(9), OCS must inform the mandated reporter that the investigation (assessment) is completed and of action taken to protect child if necessary.
- ▶ AS 47.17.025(c) applies to anyone *‘who made a request to be notified’* about the status of our investigation within 20 days after receiving a report

Key Points

- ▶ You only need to suspect maltreatment to make a report, you should leave the “investigation” to OCS
 - ▶ You do not need to notify parents that you have made a report
 - ▶ The information is usually most helpful if reported by the person who suspects the maltreatment by phone rather than by fax
 - ▶ Call equipped with as much info as possible in order for OCS to make a timely screening decision
 - ▶ We are all responsible for the safety of children
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Questions and Answers

