

Synod & Parish Protection Plan

for Children, Youth, Families & Vulnerable Adults



South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Revised, 2017
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A NOTE OF INTRODUCTION

Ministry with people is a vital part of our Christian commission. Because of our care and concern for children, youth and vulnerable adults, we need to screen and train the adults we entrust with these types of ministries. In response to the resolution passed at the 1995 Synod Assembly, the Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention developed recommendations for a Protection Program for Children and Youth. The result was a handbook which contained guidelines for screening staff and volunteers and recommendations of appropriate behaviors for adults who work with children and youth.

The intent is to protect our children, youth, vulnerable adults, the adults who work with them, and our congregations. In 2016 the Synod Children, Youth & Family Ministry Team felt that an update was necessary to the protection plan as our ministries continue to evolve including the threat of online bullying and increased technology usage. This document reflects those updates and contextual relevant revisions.

This plan is meant to be used by congregations either as a policy as it is written or as a guide for developing their own congregation specific policies. As a synod, this plan will be followed for all synod-sponsored or related ministries/events that take place.

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THE ADOPTED RESOLUTION FROM THE 1995 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

WHEREAS, our Lord had a strong affection and concern for children and a commitment to their well-being; and

WHEREAS, we as a Christ-Centered community are called to celebrate children and to intentionally protect and heal those children who are in danger or have been hurt; and

WHEREAS, ordained Clergy and Associates in Ministry (AIMS) are under the supervision of and accountable to the Synod Bishop in matters of professional ethics; and

WHEREAS, federal and state legislation has mandated youth-serving organizations to develop and implement youth protection programs (WESTLAW version of Oprah Bill); and

WHEREAS, the Episcopal Church has developed a child protection program for all their churches; and

WHEREAS, community youth development organizations have made available resources, guidelines and consultation for development and implementation of a youth protection program; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and the Lutheran Social Services develop a Policies and Procedures Manual and implement a training program to be utilized by synod congregations, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ELCA South-Central Synod of Wisconsin encourage its congregations to take responsibility for developing and adopting policies to screen and train all church workers having contact with children, including, but not limited to:

Pastors and Associates in Ministry, Administrative Assistants/Secretaries, Directors of Christian Education, Youth Workers/Directors, Preschool Directors/Staff, Sunday Church School Superintendents/Teachers Custodial workers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we ask all congregations to require their church workers in contact with children to submit to a criminal records check which would be kept confidential, read and sign a statement of code of ethics, participate in an awareness training regarding the needs of children.

ABUSE INFORMATION FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Act (1977)

The intent of the act:

To protect the health and welfare of children by encouraging the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.

To protect abused and neglected children from further harm.

To provide support, counseling, and other services to abused and neglected children and their families in order to interrupt the pattern of maltreatment.

To promote the well-being of children in their homes whenever possible.

What Is Child Abuse?

Child abuse or neglect includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; no supervision; educational neglect; medical neglect; and abandonment. Specific definitions and examples follow.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes but is not limited to lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death, bodily injury which causes serious permanent disfigurement, or bodily injury which causes permanent or protracted loss of the function of an organ or body member.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can be divided into two types—touch and non-touch. Sexual abuse involving touch includes: sexual intercourse or sexual contact; sexual exploitation; or permitting, allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution or a sexual activity. Non-touch sexual abuse includes: showing a child pornography or talking about pornography, obscene jokes, or not respecting a child's right to privacy as they shower or change clothes.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is harm to a child's psychological or intellectual functioning which may be exhibited by severe anxiety, depression or aggression. A child may have suffered emotional damage if the child exhibits severe anxiety, severe depression, severe withdrawal, or Outward aggressive behavior exhibited to a severe degree. If there are substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response or cognition, outside the range of what is normal for that child's age and stage of development, the child may have suffered emotional damage.

Emotional damage is not considered reportable child abuse until the parent, guardian or legal custodian has neglected, refused, or been unable to obtain treatment for the child of in some way has failed to take steps to relieve the child's symptoms. The only exception is for parents who have failed to seek help for reasons of poverty.

Neglect

A neglected child is one whose parent or caretaker fails, refuses or is unable for reasons other than poverty, to provide the necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

Impact of Abuse

The impact of child abuse can affect victims throughout their lives. Victims of abuse are more likely than non-victims to suffer with depression and low self-esteem. They are more susceptible to drugs, alcohol, running away, early pregnancy (for females) and becoming involved in prostitution and pornography. Child abuse victims also are more likely than non-victims to become abusers themselves.

Signs of Abuse and Neglect

Following are the major signs-of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. Evidence of one, or even several of the signs may not indicate that abuse has occurred. It may indicate that other conditions or problems exist. Child abuse and neglect may be suspected if a number of the signs occur together or frequently reoccur.

Physical Abuse

- bruises, welts on face, neck, chest, and back
- injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- unexplained bumps on palms, soles, back
- fractures that do not fit story of injury

- delay in seeking medical help
- extremes in behavior: very aggressive or withdrawn and shy
- afraid to go home
- frightened of parents
- fearful of other adults

Sexual Abuse

- fear of being touched
- unusual interest in sex for age
- pain, swelling, or itching in genital areas
- bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital areas
- difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain
- stained or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease
- refusal to take part in sports or other physical activities
- poor peer relationships
- runaway or delinquent behavior
- change in eating and sleeping habits
- regression in age level appropriate behavior
- recurring physical complaints

Emotional Abuse

- low self-esteem
- self-denigration
- severe depression
- aggression
- withdrawal
- severe anxiety
- failure to learn

Neglect

- poor hygiene, odor
- inappropriately dressed for weather
- needs' medical or dental care
- left alone, unsupervised for long periods

- failure to thrive, malnutrition
- constant hunger, begs or steals food
- extreme willingness to please
- frequent absence from school
- arrives early and stays late at school or play areas or other people's "homes."

(Information from "It shouldn't hurt to be a child... but sometimes it does" brochure, produced by the Bureau for Children, Youth and Families, Division of Community Services, Wisconsin Department Health and Social Services.)

How do I respond to a child who has been abused?

Help them feel believed.

Assure them that what happened was not their fault and they were right in telling someone.

Be sensitive to their feelings, concerns, and questions.

Let them know you are willing to listen.

Let them know that you will not discuss what they tell you with anyone who does not need to know what happened.

Facts about abuse

In calendar year 2015, county Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies and the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) received a total of 76,442 referrals from reporters alleging maltreatment of children. Educational personnel, legal / law enforcement, and social service workers accounted for the largest sources of CPS reports. A total of 27,316 of these

CPS reports, or 35.7 percent, were screened-in by CPS agencies for further assessment. These screened-in reports could involve multiple children within each report, and together they accounted for 25,878 CPS Initial Assessments of families. At the child-level, there were 42,455 CPS maltreatment reports involving 35,266 alleged child victims and 48,348 allegations of maltreatment. Some children were involved in more than one report and/or were affected by multiple allegations of maltreatment.

Neglect was the most common type of maltreatment allegation during calendar year 2015, followed by physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional damage/abuse. Of the 42,455 CPS maltreatment reports, 5,278 were substantiated allegations of maltreatment, representing 12.0 percent of the total. The maltreatment allegation types accounting for the most substantiated findings during calendar year 2015 was neglect.

There were 4,697 unique child victims of maltreatment in 2015. A child is a victim if he/she had at least one substantiated maltreatment finding at the conclusion of a CPS Initial Assessment. This represents 3.6 children per 1,000 children in Wisconsin. Females were more likely to be victims than males due to higher rates of sexual abuse. In calendar year 2015, 24 children died from substantiated maltreatment.

Roughly equal numbers of males and females were maltreaters in 2015. However, males accounted for the majority of maltreaters in sexual and

physical abuse cases, while females accounted for the majority of maltreaters in neglect cases. Primary caregivers accounted for 85.3 percent of the substantiated maltreatment.

Of the families involved in CPS Initial Assessments during calendar year 2015, 14.0 percent of families received services from the CPS agency and 17.9 percent were referred by the CPS

agency to a community resource. During 2015, 3,162 children were removed from their family home and placed in an out-of-home placement during the CPS Initial Assessment in order to ensure child safety.

(Information from Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report Annual Report for Calendar Year 2015 to the Governor and Legislature s. 48.981(9), Wis. Stats.) Used via Freedom of Information Act. <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/reports/pdf/can.pdf>

SOUTH-CENTRAL SYNOD OF WISCONSIN PROTECTION PROGRAM

Introduction to Policies & Procedures

As Christians and as members of the South-Central Synod of WI ELCA we affirm the following values:

- We are called to love, care for, and protect all persons, especially children and others who are vulnerable.
- We are called to provide safe places of justice and hospitality where all of God's children might gather to know and to be known in community and by God.
- We are called to celebrate children and to pro-actively protect and heal those who are in danger or have been hurt.
- Our churches are a holy place of sanctuary where all can gather for worship, study and service with the assurance that they are safe and secure in the community of faith.

Goals

The focus of this effort is the safety and protection of all people in our community, especially children, teens and vulnerable adults.

1. Educate people regarding the need for children and youth protection.
2. Approach children and youth protection in a positive manner.
3. Help congregations recruit, hire, and supervise volunteers and staff in such a way as to minimize the potential for abuse.
4. Provide training for volunteers and staff regarding abuse and prevention issues.

Screening of Lay and Professional Workers

Every church worker (paid or volunteer) should go through a standardized screening procedure overseen by the church. This includes, but is not limited to rostered leaders, administrative assistants, secretaries, directors of Christian education, youth workers, Sunday school, vacation Bible school and confirmation teachers, preschool directors and staff, nursery staff and volunteers, and custodial workers. This check may include a criminal records check and a reference check to verify information obtained in an interview and/or an application. No one who has committed an act of criminal sexual, physical or emotional abuse should work with children or youth. Church workers must be informed of, and demonstrate understanding of the rules they are expected to follow in their activities; and should be expected to complete and sign the Statement of Understanding after the training and prior to beginning work.

In addition to the synod's expectation of boundaries workshop participation a minimum of every three years, all ELCA Rostered Leaders are also expected to participate in their parish protection plan training program.

History of Misconduct

Any person who has been convicted of crimes outlined in Section 48.65 (Im) (g) of the Wisconsin Statutes (see page 21) should not participate in any capacity in programs for minors.

RECOMMENDED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Expectations of Volunteers and Staff

As a volunteer or staff member working in the church, you are expected to:

- teach the Good News of the Gospel
- set an example
- mentor
- be a role model
- organize meaningful experiences

Your roles will vary with your different responsibilities and may even vary at different times of the year!

In addition to the expectations already listed, we developed recommended Standards of Behavior for all individuals working in the church. These standards are designed to protect youth, adults, families, and the church.

A. Open Door Policy

Work with minors and/or vulnerable adults in reasonably open places where others are welcome to enter – not behind closed or locked doors. Always welcome and encourage parents and guardians to attend classes, rehearsals, practices, programs, meetings, and events.

B. Dual Leadership

Two adult leaders will be present at all activities involving children or youth. Private consultations between an adult and a minor shall occur in a room with a window in the door and when another adult is in the general area.

Counseling should be as confidential as possible without sacrificing safety.

Planned individual contact between an adult and a minor outside the church building shall occur only in public places and with prior consent of the minor and verbal or written consent of the parent or guardian.

C. Transportation

Transportation to and from events should be the responsibility of the families. During events, drivers should avoid dropping off or picking up minors without being accompanied by another adult, unless prior approval has been obtained by the parent or guardian.

D. Respect of Privacy

Adult leaders and staff need to respect the privacy of minors and intrude only insofar as health and safety require. Situations requiring privacy include using rest rooms, changing clothes and taking showers. If an adult accompanies a small child to the bathroom, the outer door of the bathroom will be propped open. If an adult accompanies a child into the stall of the restroom, two adults should be present. Adult leaders and staff must wear pajamas or similar clothing when sleeping and swimming suits when swimming.

E. Separate Accommodations

A minimum of two adult leaders will be present at an overnight activity.

If youth participants include males and females, the adult leaders should be males and females. Should these adults be married, a third adult is suggested.

Minors shall not share sleeping accommodations with adults. One minor shall not sleep alone in a tent, bedroom, or hotel room with one adult, unless the adult is their parent. An adult must not occupy the same bed as a minor unless it is the minor's parent or legal guardian.

Males and females will sleep in separate rooms at events and have separate access to bathroom facilities. When separate shower facilities are not available, separate shower schedules for males and females will be established.

F. Housing

When private homes are used for overnight events, the program staff member will make final approval of all adults involved as hosts, hostesses, and chaperones. At least two youth should be assigned to each home.

G. Secret Activities

Secret activities and organizations should not be allowed in the church. All aspects of the church program should be open to observation by parents and congregational leaders.

Secret activities are prohibited nor should anyone ask that activities be kept secret.

H. Positive Behavior Strategies

Discipline used in church activities should be constructive, respectful and reflect Christian values. Physical, sexual or emotional punishment should never be permitted. Never deny basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Be alert to the physical and emotional health of the children and youth with whom you work.

I. Hazing and Harassment

Physical or verbal hazing, harassment, and initiations should be prohibited at any church activity. This includes the use of put-downs and excessive teasing.

J. Dating

Adult leaders or staff should not date or be romantically involved with children or youth in the congregation.

K. Sexual Activity

No sexual contact **is** permitted between adults and minors. Sexual comments or jokes, the showing of sexual material, the exposure of sexual parts of the minor's body and/or the adult's body or other sexually abusive behaviors **are** prohibited.

L. Nursery

Any church nursery should have an identification system that links each child and his/her parent(s) in such a way that no unauthorized person may take the child. The nursery is encouraged to have two adult leaders or staff on duty at all times of operation.

M. Four Year Separation

When using high school students or young adults as Sunday School teachers, mentors or youth leaders, congregations are encouraged to consider at least a four-year separation in age between these young persons and those they are supervising or leading.

N. Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco

The use of tobacco, alcohol or any illicit drugs or over the counter or prescription drugs not used for their intended purpose, (except for wine used in communion) shall not be used by any youth while participating in any congregation sponsored youth event. Use of such products will result in the offending youth being removed from the activity and sent home. Parents will be notified of the offense.

O. Youth Group Activities

Physical contact such as wrestling, horseplay, sardines or other high contact games are not appropriate recreational activities. No adult leader will initiate or encourage physical or intimate contact with children or

youth. Setting boundaries is the responsibility of the adults. The Youth Group is a group ministry. All participants are expected to remain with the group throughout the times listed in congregation publications. No pairing, or otherwise separating off from the group to other parts of the building or grounds is permitted without adult supervision.

P. Youth Members of Boards and Committees

No youth member of a Board, Committee, Subcommittee, or Task Force, shall be in attendance at a meeting with less than two adult members present, without the presence or prior consent of the youth's parent or legal guardian.

Q. Leaving and Locking

The last three people, including the person locking the door, should leave facilities together. Avoid situations where one adult and one youth/child are left at the facility's door waiting to be picked up by parents at the end of an evening activity. Parents are encouraged to respect concluding times.

R. Visitors On-site

The staff or volunteers serving the church shall be aware of who is visiting the facilities. Visitors are welcomed and shall be accompanied on their visit to the areas frequented by our youth and children by an appropriate person.

ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The emerging “digital age” has presented the Church with a new and evolving set of communication tools which offer great promise for developing and deepening ministries of relationship. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices, and “old-fashioned” email can facilitate faith sharing and inquiry, organization for mission, and pastoral care. Their rapid manifestation raises anxieties as well. People legitimately feel discomfort with the unfamiliar. They certainly experience confusion when confronted with new tools to accomplish customary tasks. And they feel out of place in new communities that emerge around new communication technologies.

We offer this document as a guidepost to emerging technologies, and hope that it provides an opportunity for local church leaders to engage in conversation. The practice of covenanting has been shown to found and bound healthy, faithful communities. We hope this document will aid local church leaders to give expression to their own groups’ covenants, parish protection plan policies, and ministry practices in the new world of electronic communication.

Where we offer advice about specific practices, we make it from a hope that these practices are more likely to produce strong, healthy relationships in the Body of Christ, and not from a legislative impulse or an attempt to proffer legal advice. That which builds relationship is a more exacting standard than public statutes. The whole United States Code may not be summed up in the commandment “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” yet it still serves as a sound guide for Christian praxis.

Just as the apostle Paul embraced the technologies of his day to spread the gospel: writing letters, travelling by foot, by animal, and by ship; employing scribes to pen his words and readers to speak them to people he had never met; we must also embrace current technologies to build up the Body of Christ.

Recommendations

(Minor to Adult Relationships)

1. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to minors or youth. Youth may request friendships with adults, and adults should discern the level of contact they want to maintain with youth prior to responding to these requests.
2. When and where available, adult leaders are encouraged to create separate private and professional profiles on networking sites to create a line of privacy.
3. Adult leaders who choose to accept friend requests from minors or youth should use all privacy settings applicable to shield youth from any inappropriate content that may exist within the authorized youth worker’s profile.
4. All youth and adults should be informed that any communication that is sent via digital means (email, social networking site notes or posts, etc.) is not confidential and may be reported or shared with others.
5. We strongly recommend “closed” groups, but not “hidden” groups be used for Youth groups. These groups should have both youth and adult administrators.
6. Youth group social networking site groups should be open to parents of current members.
7. Any inappropriate material that is not covered by “Mandatory Reporting” laws should be deleted from the site. Any material that is covered by “Mandatory Reporting” laws should be reported to the a pastor, documented for church records, and then deleted from the site.
8. Any content that details inappropriate behavior during a church sponsored event or activity should be addressed by adult leaders and parents.
9. Parents should be informed that content that appears on youth pages or groups that are not sponsored by the church are NOT within the purview of authorized youth workers.

Recommendations (Adult to Adult Relationships)

1. It is a best practice that adult members of congregations or communities of faith who seek religious or spiritual advice from clergy via digital means (email, social networking site posts, etc.) be informed that their communication is NOT always confidential. Use of digital means to communicate can nullify confidentiality.
2. When and where available, clergy are encouraged to consider creating a personal and a professional account to maintain appropriate boundaries with members of their congregations or other members of communities of faith.
3. Clergy should consider the impact of declining a “friend” request from their church members. These encounters may create tension in “real world” relationships.
4. Clergy who work directly with youth are encouraged to establish church sponsored digital communications groups to maintain contact with youth members.
5. Clergy are encouraged to use privacy settings to shield both adult and youth members from viewing content that may be inappropriate.

General Recommendations for Communication and Contact

Recommendations for Transitions

1. Clergy who are leaving a specific ministry setting (congregation, cluster youth ministry, association, conference) should refrain from offering pastoral care through digital communication after the END date of their contract/call/covenant with their community of faith.
2. Former youth members and adult leaders of youth groups, due to departure, removal or loss of eligibility (aged out of a program) should be removed from digital communication youth groups (Facebook groups, list serves, etc.) (See Covenant recommendations for additional information).

Recommendations for Digital Covenants

1. Digital Covenants should acknowledge that materials posted on Church Sponsored sites (and or group pages) are not CONFIDENTIAL.
2. Digital Covenants should acknowledge that content deemed inappropriate will be removed from the site or group page.

Digital Covenants for congregations should address the following issues:

- appropriate language,
- eligibility of membership (do you have to be a member of a local congregation or youth group, are parents of current members eligible, are their age requirements/ restrictions for participation, etc.),
- content that can be posted/published on the site or page (Rule of thumb: post your information and not others'),
- who, how and when may photos be tagged (members identified by name; for example, individuals may tag themselves in photos but should not tag others),
- stipulate appropriate and inappropriate (bullying, pictures that depict abuse, violence, sexual acts, etc.) behavior of members and the consequence for inappropriate behavior,
- transitions, due to departure, loss of eligibility or removal of youth members and/ or adult leaders, and
- mandatory reporting laws will be followed (See glossary of terms for additional information on mandatory reporting laws).

Recommendations for Video Chats, Blogs or Video Blogs:

1. Adults should refrain from initiating video chats with youth.
2. Participants in a video chat or blog should consider what will be shown in the video such as their surroundings, their

clothing/state of dress, etc.

3. All transcripts of on--line text chats, video chats, blogs or video blogs should be saved when possible.
4. All clergy and authorized youth workers should consider the content and nature of any post that will be read by or visible to youth. Your voice is often considered the voice of the church, and your content may be viewed as church policy.

Recommendations for Publishing/Posting Content Online

1. All Communities of faith should take care to secure signed Media Release forms from adults and guardians of minor children who will or may participate in activities that may be photographed or videoed for distribution.
2. Any congregation that distributes video of its congregational services or activities on the web or via other broadcast media MUST post signs that indicate the service will be broadcast.
3. Congregations are NOT considered PUBLIC space and therefore must inform participants when they are being videoed.
4. Photos that are published on church sponsored sites should not include name or contact information for minor children or youth.

REPORTING

Reporting Violations of Congregational Standards

If an adult volunteer or staff person is suspected of inappropriate behavior, action needs to be taken. This is the procedure to evaluate the impact of this behavior on the adult's suitability to work with children and youth.

1. An allegation should be made in writing and submitted to the youth task force.
2. The youth task force reviews the allegation to determine if it substantially relates to youth safety and/or the work the individual is performing. Use the standards of behavior in this handbook and the Wisconsin statutes.
3. If the behavior does not put children or youth at risk or raise safety concerns, have a conversation with the individual about steps to re-solve the problem.
4. If the behavior raises children and youth safety concerns, suspend the individual until the circumstances surrounding the allegation are reviewed by the youth task force.
5. Notify people on a need-to-know basis of the suspension.
6. The youth task force reviews the evidence and removes the individual if evidence shows there are youth safety concerns.
7. Notify people on a need-to-know basis of the resolution.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

According to Section 48.981 of the Wisconsin Statutes, those having cause to suspect that a minor, seen in the course of professional responsibility, has or will be the victim of abuse or neglect, must report the case immediately (not more than 24 hours after cause) by telephone or personal visit to the local county child social service agency, the office of the county sheriff, or the city police department.

Those required to report include: physicians, coroners, physical/occupational/speech therapists, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, optometrists, paramedics, ambulance staff, child care workers, alcohol and drug counselors, social and public assistance workers, school administrators and counselors, teachers, and law enforcement officers. All leaders and staff, even those who are not mandated reporters, can view reporting suspected abuse as a moral responsibility to help assure children and youth a safe environment.

Concern for the alleged Victim, good judgment and open communication are the standards surrounding the reporting of an alleged case of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Any person who reports an incident in good faith is immune from either civil or criminal liability and may not be discharged from employment for doing so. All reports are treated with confidentiality by the authorities.

Suspicious of child abuse occurring during an event should be reported to the event coordinator and local authorities. The alleged perpetrator should be separated from children, and supervised until the proper authorities arrive on the scene. Keep calm, stay with the child and know that you do not have to deal with the victim or information alone. Do not try to investigate or interrogate either the child or the alleged perpetrator.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or a child has confided in you that he/she has been abused, consider the following steps:

- Stay calm, listen respectfully to the child. How you respond sends critical messages to the child. If the child suspects shock, panic, disgust or other negative reactions, the child may not talk about the abuse, may deny the abuse, or may think that the abuse is his or her fault.
- Is the child in immediate danger? Can the child return to the parent or caretaker? Is there immediate fear of harm?
- If you suspect that there is abuse occurring with a child with whom you work, is there another volunteer or staff member who could support or identify this abuse along with you?
- Do not try to investigate what has happened or what you believe may have happened. The reporter's job is only to report, others will handle investigation and judgments.
- Please note that reporting child abuse is not mandated for volunteers working with children and youth. Your reporting of child abuse is viewed as a moral responsibility to assure a safe environment for the child.
- Anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, and has reported this in good faith, is immune from civil or criminal liability.
- Non-emergency reporting (child not in immediate danger) is handled through the county Department of Social/Human Services. You will first talk with a social worker who will take the report from you.
- Be prepared to give the child's name, address, parent's names, sibling's names, schools attended, and any other factual family background that you know. (But a name alone is sufficient. You are not the investigator.)
- It is strongly encouraged that you give your name (even first name only) and your phone number; all information is legally kept confidential.
- Your report is given to a social worker who investigates the case. Giving your name and phone number allows the social worker to call you and ask for further information; in most cases you would be called only once.
- In emergency situations (child is in immediate danger), you are asked to contact local law enforcement, which in most counties, is now a 9—1 -1 call and your report will be taken.

- Once a report is filed, an investigation must begin Within 24 hours and must be completed Within 60 days; You, as the reporting person, may request a letter to confirm that an investigation will be done. Results of the investigation will not be sent to you unless you are a mandated reporting party.
- After the investigation has been completed and if any abuse has been substantiated, the county may require the following actions to be taken by the family: parenting classes, AODA counseling, parent time outs from children, removal of the child from the home, counseling for the child, as well as other options. The person who allegedly abused the child may be charged with child abuse in either criminal court or juvenile court.

WISCONSIN STATUTES

Excerpts From The Wisconsin Statutes

The following are excerpts from the Wisconsin statutes that create the basis for persons to report suspected child maltreatment and for child protective services agencies to respond. The excerpts are from the 2013-2014 Wisconsin Statutes. Included in the excerpts are sections from Chapter 48, known as the Children's Code, and sections from criminal statutes that are cross-referenced in the Children's Code.

- s. 48.01, Wis. Stats., Title and legislative purpose
- s. 48.02, Wis. Stats., Definitions. This includes definitions of child maltreatment.
- s. 48.13, Wis. Stats., Jurisdiction over children alleged to be in need of protection or services. This describes the basis on which the local child protective services agencies (county social/human services departments and the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services) may petition the court to intervene with a family.
- s. 48.981, Wis. Stats., Abused or neglected children and abused unborn children. This section describes the reporting requirements of alleged child maltreatment and describes the child protective services agencies' duties and responsibilities.
- s. 939.22, Wis. Stats., Words and phrases defined. This section defines terms that are used in describing certain crimes, some of which are cross-referenced in s. 48.02, Wis. Stats., in order to define child maltreatment.
- s. 940.225, Wis. Stats., Sexual assault. This defines the crime of sexual assault and is crossreferenced under s. 48.02(1)(b), Wis. Stats.
- s. 940.285, Wis. Stats. This defines the crime of abuse of individuals at risk crossreferenced under s. 46.90(1)(fg)(cm)(gb), Wis. Stats.
- s. 944.30, Wis. Stats., Prostitution. This defines the crime of prostitution and is cross-referenced under s. 48.02(1)(d), Wis. Stats.
- s. 948.02, Wis. Stats., Sexual assault of a child. This is the first in a series of crimes from chapter 948, known as Crimes Against Children, that are cross-referenced under s. 48.02(1)(b), Wis. Stats., in order to define child sexual abuse. The following sections are also cross-referenced under s. 48.02(1), Wis. Stats.:
 - o s. 948.025, Wis. Stats., Engaging in repeated acts of sexual assault of the same child.
 - o s. 948.05, Wis. Stats., Sexual exploitation of a child.
 - o s. 948.055, Wis. Stats., Causing a child to view or listen to sexual activity.
 - o s. 948.085, Wis. Stats., Sexual assault of a child placed in substitute care.
 - o s. 948.10, Wis. Stats., Exposing genitals, pubic area, or intimate parts. The complete

Wisconsin statutes can be viewed at the Wisconsin State Legislature website:

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/prefaces/toc>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Child Abuse & Neglect Report by the Bureau of Children, Youth, and Families, Wisconsin Division of Community Services, Department of Health & Social Services.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/reports/pdf/can.pdf>

Additional Reports and Data from the Bureau of Children, Youth, and Families, Wisconsin Division of Community Services, Department of Health & Social Services.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/reports>

Various Resources by Church Mutual Insurance Company.

<https://www.churchmutual.com/169/Child-and-Youth-Sexual-Abuse>

<https://www.churchmutual.com/246/Child-and-Youth-Abuse-Prevention-Resources>

<https://www.churchmutual.com/index.cfm?ldp=seniorbullying>

<https://www.churchmutual.com/137/Sexual-Misconduct-and-Molestation>

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Tips for Parents booklet by Children's Trust Fund.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/2004guide.pdf>

Sexual Misconduct Prevention information from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. <https://www.elca.org/About/Churchwide/Office-of-the-Secretary/Legal-Issues/Sexual-Misconduct-Prevention>

Risk Management, Loss Prevention and Insurance resources from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. <https://www.elca.org/en/About/Churchwide/Office-of-the-Secretary/Risk-Management>

Wisconsin Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Board.

<https://preventionboard.wi.gov/Pages/Homepage.aspx>

Abuse and Neglect of Vulnerable Adults by Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy.

<http://www.disabilityrightswi.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/abuse-and-neglect.PDF>