

## Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Child abuse and neglect rarely stop without help from outside the immediate family. Reporting abuse or neglect can protect a child and get help for a family. It may even save a child's life.

In every state, mandated reporters are required by law to identify themselves when reporting. These include health practitioners, lawyers, clergy, film processors, mental health professionals, social workers, teachers, day care workers, and law enforcement personnel. In fact, all citizens are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect. You can make a report without giving your name. If you have reason to believe a child or adolescent has been or may be harmed, you must report it.

### To report child abuse in Calaveras County you may call:

- 209-754-6452 (M-F 8:00am-5:00pm) - Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency
- 209-754-6500 (Anytime) - Calaveras County Sheriff's Department
- In an emergency, call 911

It is helpful if you can share the following information:

- the name, address, and age of the child
- the name and address of the child's parent, guardian, or caretaker
- the child's condition, including the nature and extent of the injury or neglect
- any information regarding the presence of weapons, alcohol/drug abuse, or other factors affecting the social worker's safety

### What Happens After a Report of Child Abuse Has Been Made?

Children are seldom removed permanently from their homes. If Children's Services investigates the case, a full assessment will be made to determine future actions involving the child and the family. Help may be provided to the family in the form of counseling, referrals to other helping agencies, emergency foster care services, intensive in-home services, and/or help with housing, finances, medical needs, and child care.

### When a Child Discloses

When a child tells you that he or she has been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty, ashamed, angry, and powerless. You may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, or disbelief. It is important for you to remain calm and in control of your feelings in front of the child. Reassure them that you will try to help keep them safe.

You can show your care and concern by listening carefully, telling the child that you believe them, telling the child that the abuse was not their fault, and letting the child know you will make a report to help stop the abuse.