



## SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT CHILD CARE

### COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES LICENSING PROGRAM

In your role as a childcare provider, you may encounter many different aspects of your work that will be challenging and difficult. One such aspect is the possibility that you may be made aware of a child's need to be protected. This could happen in one of three ways:

- You notice something different about the child;
- The child comes to you with information; or
- Someone other than the child provides you with information.

Abused and neglected children almost always show signs of their suffering. Some of the most common signs include:

- Unexplained bruises especially on face, lower back, thighs and upper arms
- Unexplained bruises on an infant
- Different colours of bruises indicating different stages of healing
- Unexplained fractures
- Constant complains such as sore throats or stomach aches that have no medical explanation
- Lack of proper hygiene
- Clothing inappropriate to weather conditions
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Bruises on breasts, buttocks or thighs
- Sudden onset of nightmares, bedwetting, and/or fear of the dark
- Sudden change in attitude towards someone
- Expressing sexual knowledge not unusual for their age in their language, behaviour or play
- Becoming anxious and fearful after being outgoing and friendly.

#### **If the child comes to you with information:**

Childcare providers often develop strong, trusting relationships with children they care for. This trust can promote a communicative openness that comes only within the boundaries of a secure, familiar environment such as daycare or out-of-school care. Childcare providers, therefore, may be the one adult a child feels safe to share their experience with. Known as disclosure, the childcare provider must accept the information provided and follow a procedure that will ensure the child's physical and emotional safety.

If a child who is being abused tells you what has happened, do the following:

1. Stay calm
2. Listen to the child
3. Let them know you believe them – state “I believe you”
4. Reassure them – “I’m glad you’re telling me this.” “It’s okay to share this with me”
5. Tell them you’re sorry it happened and let them know that is not their fault
6. Don’t promise to keep it a secret
7. Don’t say that “everything will be fine now.” It may take a lot of time before everything is find again
8. Do not question the child – this is the job of a skilled social worker
9. Do not advise the parents or emergency contacts of the disclosure.

If the abuse/neglect did occur at a licensed child care facility, contact your Licensing Officer immediately. The Licensing program is the investigating agency and must be notified before any investigation begins.

Your Licensing Officer is responsible to investigate the allegations under the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and Child Care Licensing Regulation. S/he will determine the level or response required and may require the assistance of a Social Worker from the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

If the abuse/neglect did not occur at your facility, you must report to a child protection Social Worker in either the Ministry for Children and Family Development officer, or a First Nations Welfare Agency that provides child protection services.

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**Victoria**  
201 – 771 Vernon Avenue  
Victoria, BC V8X 5A7  
Ph: 250.519.3401  
Fax: 250.519.3402  
Website: [Community Care Facilities Licensing](#)

**Nanaimo**  
29 – 1925 Bowen Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9S 1H1  
Ph: 250.739.5800  
Fax: 250.740.2675

**Courtenay**  
355 – 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4  
Ph: 250.331.8620  
Fax: 250.331.8596

**Campbell River**  
200 – 1100 Island Highway  
Campbell River, BC V9W 8C6  
Ph: 250.850.2110  
Fax: 250.850.2455

- Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Call the local district office listed in the blue pages of the phone book.
- Monday to Friday, 4:30 pm. to 8:30 a.m., all day Saturday and Sunday, and on statutory holidays – Call the Helpline for Children 250.310.1234 (toll free).
- When a child is in immediate danger, call the police – 911.

**If someone other than the child provides you with information:**

If someone else approaches you with information about a child in your care, for example a co-worker or staff member, encourage him or her to make their report to the Ministry. You should also make a report, even if you believe someone else is reporting, or if you are aware that a Child Protection Social Worker is already involved with the child. Time is essential in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Report immediately.

It is important to remember that making a report to the Ministry is not a conviction; it is an allegation that will prompt an investigation by a Child Protection Social Worker. You do not have to be right to make a report.

The protection of children in our care is our top priority.