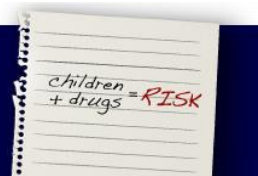




NATIONAL ALLIANCE  
FOR DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN



## Making an Effective Call to the Child Abuse Reporting Hotline

Mandatory reporters may think they do not have a lot of information to provide during the initial call to a child abuse reporting hotline, but they may very well have quite a bit of useful information. The questions that child welfare hotline workers ask during the call can vary from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction, however they have many similarities.



Child's  
Name and  
Information



Location/  
Address



Abuse/  
Neglect  
Allegation

### Reporters should provide as much detailed information as possible such as:

- **Child:** age, gender, condition, school or child care provider address and current whereabouts
- **Parents/caregivers:** name, address, and their whereabouts
- **Person alleged to have caused the child's condition:** name, address, and his/her current location, and current and future access to the child (i.e. do they live in the home, is the child with them, etc.)
- **Family:** other children in the home and their ages, others in the home, & any supports for the child
- **Type, description and nature of the maltreatment:** length of time it has been occurring, whether the maltreatment has increased in severity or frequency, and whether objects or weapons were used. Evidence of current or previous injuries. Witnesses of the maltreatment.
- **Safety threats for first responders and child welfare workers** to include guns, vicious animals, violence in the home, etc.

### Child Welfare can also benefit from:

- What you saw, heard, smelled or discovered that led to the call: Be descriptive!
- A description of the risks to the child: substance abuse/drug activity in the home; dirty/hazardous house; lack of necessities; lack of supervision; domestic violence; chaotic home;
- Statements made by the child, parent/caretaker, neighbors or others
- Actions observed of the child or caretaker. For example, describe if a child appears fearful of a caretaker (e.g., the child cowers when a caretaker talks to the child); if a child is "parentified," that is he/she appears to be the adult in the household (e.g., makes adult decisions or takes care of siblings); or if a child is not developmentally on target (e.g., behind in vocabulary, doesn't roll over or when should, does not communicate, etc.)
- Known criminal history, pending charges, call history and family history
- The attitude of family members or caretakers: Describe if they are defensive, do not understand the risk to the children, or refuse to cooperate.

Information provided will help paint a picture for child welfare about potential child maltreatment. The more information provided, the better prepared child welfare is to make decisions about the children and families involved, as well as making sure the children are safe.

*All the above information is not needed to make a report. If you are not sure you have enough information to report, always err on the side of safety of the child and **make the call.***