**Who Can Report**?

ANYONE may make a report of suspected child abuse to either the department of housing and human services or law enforcement. You do not need proof, just a suspicion**.**

**Who is Required to Report?**

[Mandated reporters](http://www.lpdirect.net/casb/crs/19-3-304.html) (primarily those that work with or are responsible for the health/safety of children) are required by law to make a report of suspect abuse. However, whether you are a mandated reporter or not, it’s your moral obligation to stand up for children.

**Who to Call?**

In Boulder County call the [Department of Housing and Human Services](http://www.bouldercounty.org/dept/housinghumanservices/pages/default.aspx):

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**303-441-1309**

or Law Enforcement

[**Longmont Police Department**](http://www.longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/public-safety-department) **303-651-8501**

[**Boulder County Sheriff**](http://www.bouldercounty.org/safety/sheriff/pages/default.aspx) **303-441-4444**

[**Firestone Police Department**](http://www.ci.firestone.co.us/index.aspx?nid=178) **303-833-0811**

[**Frederick Police Department**](http://www.frederickco.gov/?nid=360) **720-382-5700**

[**Erie Police Department**](https://www.erieco.gov/246/Police-Department) **303-926-2800**

[**Weld County Sheriff**](http://www.weldsheriff.com/) **970-356-4014**

**Outside Boulder County, click** [**HERE or call**](https://co4kids.org/)

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**Outside Colorado Call:**

**1-800-4-ACHILD**

**What If I’m Not Sure? Where Do I Go?**

* **Child Advocacy Centers** coordinate all the professionals (legal and social services) involved in a case. [**Blue Sky Bridge**](http://www.blueskybridge.org)
* To find one outside of Boulder County, contact National Children’s Alliance [**HERE**](http://www.nca-online.org/) or at 1-800-239-9950.
* **Child Abuse Helplines** have staff specifically trained to deal with questions about suspected child sexual abuse. Please refer to our website’s section [Get Help and Get Connected](http://www.longmontpinwheel.org/?p=162).
* [**Local Community Agencies**](http://www.longmontpinwheel.org/?p=154), such as local hotlines, United Way offices, or rape crisis centers can often help.
* **Talk to the child’s parents** (as long as they are not the abusers) and provide educational materials, such as the [**5 Steps to Protecting Our Children Guide**](https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FINAL_D2L_5-STEPS-BOOKLET.pdf)**.** If the parent seems indifferent or unlikely to take action, call one of the other recommended sources.

These resources can help if you are unsure about whether abuse has occurred, but they do not substitute for making an official report. Remember that you may be a mandated reporter in your state and you may be the only source of protection that the child has.

**Can I Get In Trouble?**

No. Sometimes people worry they can get in trouble legally if it turns out their suspicions are not confirmed. Don’t let this deter you from making a report, you will not be penalized. Under State of Colorado law – persons making good faith reports of suspected abuse or neglect are immune from any liability, both civil and criminal unless a court determines that such person’s behavior was willful, wanton or malicious (C.R. S. 19-3-309). **In other words, you are protected, make the report**.

Finally, never forget being wrong about suspected child sexual assault is a good thing.

**What Should I Expect?**

You may wonder what to expect when making a report of suspected abuse. Will you be asked about what proof you have? Will they call you with follow-up questions? Will they share your contact information with the suspected abuser? Will the child get put in a foster home?

It might be helpful to familiarize yourself with some of the questions you may be asked. The Child Protective Specialist who answers your call will ask you for as much information as you can provide about both the suspected abuse or maltreatment and details about the family about which you are calling. Below are examples of some questions the Child Protective Specialist might ask you when you call. Remember, even if you have very little information available to you, please call. Potential questions the screener may ask:

* your name
* your number
* the child's name
* the child's age
* the location of the child
* your relationship to the child
* any immediate concerns about the child's safety
* information on the situation including all physical and behavioral indicators observed
* information about the family, parents and alleged offenders
* other child(ren) who may be affected
* information about other persons or agencies closely involved with the child and/or family
* any other relevant information concerning the child and/or family such as what language they speak or their religion.
* What is the nature and extent of the child's injuries, or the risk of harm to the child?
* Have there been any prior suspicious injuries to this child or his/ her siblings?
* What is the child's name, home address, and date of birth or age?
* What is the name and address of the parent or other person legally responsible who caused the injury, or created the risk of harm to the child?
* What are the names and addresses of the child's siblings and parents if different from the information provided above?
* Do you have any information regarding treatment of the child, or the child's current whereabouts?
* You will need to provide the child’s name, date of birth, address and parents names if you have them.

Expect very little interaction with the screener beyond the questions they ask. At this point your report is not an active investigation but simply in the information gathering stage.

The specialists will analyze the information you do have and determine next steps. You will receive a form letter in the mail stating you made a report and the date the report was taken. That is likely the last you will hear about your report. Child protective services, and in some cases, law enforcement will take it from there.

**What Happens Next?**

The Child Protective Service (CPS) unit of the local department of social services is required to begin an investigation of each report within 24-72 hours depending on the nature of the call. The investigation should include an evaluation of the safety of the child named in the report and any other children in the home, and a determination of the risk to the children if they continue to remain in the home. For a detailed description of how the child welfare system typically works, click [HERE](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/cpswork.pdf). For an overview of the Boulder County approach to child welfare click [HERE](https://www.bouldercounty.org/families/child/child-protection-services/).

Remember the goal of Child Welfare is safety. The removal of children from their homes is the intervention of last resort and only occurs when specific safety and risk issues present serious imminent concern. When this occurs, Child Protective Services works to remove barriers to reunification wherever possible.