

Protecting Children Is What We Do

To Learn More Call Us Today:

Southern Nevada (702) 458-7009, Washoe County (775) 856-6200

Reporting Child Abuse

Child abuse exists in every community, and even one case is one too many. By recognizing the signs of child abuse and knowing what to do, you become the child's and the family's greatest source of hope.

Report child abuse to:

- CPS (in Clark County Nevada – (702) 399-0081 [24 hours/day])
- Las Vegas Metro Police (3-1-1 or 9-1-1)
- Online at <https://redrock.clarkcountynv.gov/dfswebform>

There is no federal agency that has jurisdiction over child abuse cases. Instead, child protective services (CPS; Social Services; Dept. Family Services, etc.) is the state or local agency that handles the cases. Each state has its own laws and guidelines about child abuse reporting and investigations. In Nevada the laws can be accessed on www.leg.state.nv.us. You can also call the National Clearinghouse at (800) 394-3366 or your local or state CPS for more information. Child abuse can be physical, sexual or emotional, or it can be any form of neglect.

Signs of physical abuse may include:

- Bruises or broken bones on children not yet old enough to walk
- Unexplained bruises, burns or cuts
- Bald spots
- Fear of adults, especially parents
- Fear of physical contact
- Risk-taking
- Destructiveness toward self or others
- Acting like a much younger child
- Poor social skills
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Clothing that may be inappropriate for warmer months to cover marks

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Secretiveness or refusal to undress in front of others
- Unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual things
- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Fear of a particular person or family member
- Depression or withdrawal
- Over-compliance
- Aggression
- Poor social skills
- Poor school performance
- Pain during urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Frequent vomiting
- Genital or anal itching, rashes, bruising, bleeding or pain
- Frequent yeast or urinary tract infections
- Wetting pants or bed

Signs of emotional abuse may include:

- Delay in physical or social development
- Speech, sleep or eating disorders
- Repetitive actions, such as rocking, sucking or biting
- Lack of concentration
- Lack of emotion
- Lack of interest in things that child used to enjoy
- Increased emotional needs
- Depression or withdrawal
- Aggression
- Wetting pants or bed

Signs of neglect may include:

- Clothing that is dirty, torn, poorly fitting or inappropriate for the weather
- Sleepiness
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Hoarding or stealing food
- Inappropriate responsibility for younger siblings
- Apparent lack of supervision
- Frequent lateness or absences from school or other activities
- Destructive behavior, i.e. hurting him or herself or others
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social skills
- Learning disabilities or lower mental ability than normal for age

If a child tells you about abuse, know what to do.

- Do not act shocked, instead remain calm and accepting. Reassure the child that you believe him or her. Say that he or she did the right thing by telling you.
- Tell the child that the abuse is not his or her fault, but do not speak negatively about the abusive adult.
- Do not promise to keep the child's disclosure a secret and let the child know that to provide help, you will have to tell another trusted adult.
- Tell the child what you will try to do to help, and what he or she may expect.
- Assure the child that things may be difficult at first, but will get better and don't promise that the abuse will stop.
- If a child tells you about sexual abuse right after it happens, do not bathe the child or change his or her clothes.
- If you are worried about a child's immediate safety or if the child is afraid to go home, call 9-1-1 or CPS. Do not take the child home with you.

Report child abuse to:

- CPS (in Clark County Nevada – (702) 399-0081),
- Metro (3-1-1 or 9-1-1)
- Online at <https://redrock.clarkcountynv.gov/dfswebform>. o (Anyone choosing to complete the form and submit it as an attachment, should email it to DFSHotline@ClarkCountyNV.gov)
- A person must report or act “as soon as reasonably practical.” If, in light of all the surrounding facts and circumstances which are known or which reasonably should be known to the person at the time, a reasonable person would act within approximately the same period under those facts and circumstances (NRS 432B.121).
- A report of suspected child abuse or neglect is only a request for an investigation. The person making the report does not need to prove or provide proof that abuse has or may have occurred. Investigation is the responsibility of the Child Protective Services Agency and/or law enforcement.

Remember to trust your instincts. It is better to report and be mistaken than not to report. Adults who are being investigated for child abuse are not allowed to know who makes a report. In most states, reports can be anonymous.

Sources: Reporting Child Abuse: a Prevent Child Abuse America Publication 2003, 2006 by Prevent Child Abuse America; Clark County website: <http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/family-services/services/Pages/ChildProtectiveServices.aspx>