

Who should report suspected abuse or neglect of a child?

KRS 620.030(1) - Anyone with a reasonable suspicion that a child is dependent, abused or neglected is required to make a report to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Who is a professional reporting source?

KRS 620.030(2) provides a limited list of example professional reporting sources to include but not limited to: doctor, mental health provider, law enforcement, school guidance counselor.

Reporting sources will be asked if the information in the report was obtained through their role as a professional.

What information does the intake worker need from the reporter?

The following basic information is requested:

- The child's name, sex and date of birth or approximate age
- The name of the person believed to have been responsible for the abuse or neglect and the relationship between the child(ren) and perpetrator
- Objective information regarding concerns and extent of abuse, neglect or dependency
 - Including current condition of the child(ren)
- The current location of the child(ren) and perpetrator (if known)
- Where the child(ren) attends school/daycare
- Contact information for the family including last known address/phone number
- Any immediate safety threats for the child or worker
- The reporter's name and identifying information if the caller wishes to give that information. Anonymous reports are accepted and investigated.

What is the legal protection for someone reporting abuse or neglect?

[KRS 620.050](#)

KRS 620.050(1) protects reporting sources who are acting in “good faith” when they make a report. These protections extend to the participating in any judicial proceeding stemming from the report or action. This is called good faith immunity.

KRS 620.050(11) Identifying information concerning the individual initiating the report shall not be disclosed.

***There are exceptions to this rule regarding investigative individuals with a legitimate interest in the case and a court ruling after an in camera review of the record has been complete. Refer to the above linked statute for a full list of exceptions.

While it is encouraged for an individual to leave their name when making a report in case a worker has follow up questions, reports can be made anonymously.

****If you wish to remain anonymous you will not be privy to any information or communication regarding the status of the report.

Can an investigative worker interview a child without the parent’s consent?

[KRS 620.072](#)

KRS 620.072(4)- A school or childcare provider shall provide access to the child without parental consent.

Can a social worker just take a child out of the home?

[KRS 620.040](#)

No. A social worker does not have the legal authority to remove a child from a home without a judge's order.

Law enforcement has the authority per statute to remove a child, placing the child in protective custody. Within 12 hours of taking a child into protective custody, law enforcement or the person whom law enforcement entrusts with the child shall request the court to issue an emergency custody order.

Hospital administrators or treating physicians have the authority per statute to hold a child for up to 72 hours without a court order. During this time a request is made to the court for emergency custody. Statute specifies the request is to be made at the earliest practicable time.

[KRS 620.060](#)

This statute states an emergency custody order shall not be effective for longer than 72 hours, excluding holidays and weekends. This can be extended or delayed based on the waiver or request of the child's parent, or a temporary removal hearing has been held.

I suspect my neighbor is harming their children-What should I do?

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, please contact the statewide Child Abuse Hotline toll free at (877) 597-2331 to make a report. You also may go online to the [Child Reporting System](#) Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern time to make a report.

*****If there is an emergency contact law enforcement. CHFS is not a designated first responder.**

What happens to children who are being abused if it is reported?

Reports are investigated by DCBS. The children's safety is assessed throughout the assessment/investigation. Interviews are conducted with the family and collateral can be interviewed to provide a holistic assessment of the family and their needs. Based on the information obtained during the assessment/investigation, service referrals can be made to assist the family. If needed, a case can be opened for ongoing services by DCBS.

The Cabinet can open a case while the children are still in the home, to provide ongoing services to the family. During the ongoing case, the worker will have monthly home visits with the family and children, follow up with service providers on progress, and make additional referrals as needed. This is called an in-home case.

If the concerns rise to the level where children must be removed via a court order and are placed in foster care, this is called an Out of Home Care case. The children and parents will receive monthly visits from the worker, who will also follow up with service providers on progress, make any additional referrals as needed, and report back to the court the family's progress in their case plan.