

Support & Referrals

If you encounter a child or family who could benefit from support services, consider referring that family to community-based programs in your area.

If possible, a “warm hand-off” is always better than a simple referral; this means that you assist the family with outreach to the resources and supports, guiding them through the process.

Find more resources:

<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

OCFS HEARS Family Line

(Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure and Support)

1-888-55HEARS (1-888-554-3277)
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

NYS Office of Children and Family Services

The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities.

For more information about OCFS, please visit our website at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov>

For resources and more information for mandated reporters:
<http://nysmandatedreporter.org>

The Mandated Reporter Hotline for child abuse and maltreatment reports:
1 (800) 635-1522



Mandated Reporting







DEFINITIONS OF MALTREATMENT AND ABUSE





Definitions

For professionals working with children and families, it is important to understand the definitions of maltreatment and abuse. In New York State, parents, and other people legally responsible for children, must provide the minimum degree of care, which includes:

-  Food
-  Clothing
-  Shelter
-  Medical care
-  Education
-  Adequate supervision

The minimum degree of care standard does not necessarily equate to optimal parenting. For example, food may be the same meal every day; clothing does not need to be fashionable. The child's residence *does* need to be structurally sound and able to pass a code inspection.

Note: When determining whether the minimum degree of care was taken, we must consider whether the parent was financially able to provide for the child or was offered financial or other means to do so. *Remember, poverty in and of itself, is not maltreatment or abuse.*

Caregivers must provide children with basic medical, dental, optometrical or surgical care, if they are financially able to do so.

Caregivers must also ensure that children are actively enrolled in school. This *does not* mean a child has to be earning high grades, participating in activities, or have impeccable attendance.

Under state law, a child is *maltreated* when:

1. a child under eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for the child fails to provide the minimum degree of care and that failure results in harm or imminent danger of harm to the child's physical, mental or emotional condition, OR
2. a parent or other person legally responsible causes a non-accidental, serious physical injury to a child, OR
3. a child under eighteen years of age who has been abandoned by their parents or other person legally responsible for their care.

Note: Actual harm is not always required. If a parent or other person legally responsible for a child puts their physical, mental, or emotional condition at imminent risk of harm – that is maltreatment.

Under state law, a child is *abused* when:

1. a child under eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for a child inflicts (or allows someone else to inflict) a non-accidental serious injury which causes:
 - a. a substantial risk of death
 - b. serious or protracted disfigurement
 - c. protracted impairment of physical or emotional health
 - d. protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ

OR:

2. a child under eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for a child creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of non accidental physical injury which would be likely to:
 - a. cause death
 - b. serious or protracted disfigurement
 - c. protracted impairment of physical or emotional health
 - d. protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily organ

OR:

3. a parent or person legally responsible commits, or allows someone else to commit, a sex crime against a child.