

Reporting Child Abuse

You play a key role in ensuring the health, safety and well-being of children and youth under your care and supervision.

All individuals working with children in a DoD sponsored facility or activity are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the installation Family Advocacy Program (FAP), the DoD program designated to address child abuse and neglect in military families. Ensure you are following your installations reporting policies and procedures informing your chain of command when a report is made.

How to report child abuse

- If you witness violence or know someone is in **immediate** danger, call 911 or the military police.
- If you suspect a child has been abused or neglected, whether by a parent or staff member/volunteer in a DoD-sponsored facility or activity, follow your organization's procedures for reporting your concern to the installation FAP and/or local civilian child protection agency. You can also call your state's child abuse reporting hotline, the DoD Child Abuse and Safety Hotline, 1-877-790-1197, or [Childhelp](http://Childhelp.org), 800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453). You will be asked for identifying information about the child and family and specific information about the nature of your concern. You may have the option to file an anonymous report.

Assessing reports of child abuse

When a report of suspected abuse or neglect is made to the FAP, a licensed professional social worker will coordinate with the military sponsor's commander, key military departments, the DoD-sponsored facility or activity if applicable, and civilian child protection agencies to complete a comprehensive assessment. The FAP's goals are to prevent abuse, protect victims, and preserve families whenever possible.

After the report

- If the case is found to meet the DoD criteria for child abuse or neglect, treatment to promote family functioning and prevent further abuse or neglect may be recommended.
- If the case does not meet criteria but the family is under stress, services including parent education or counseling may be offered to support the family and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.

To protect the privacy of all those involved, an individual making the report will most likely not know the outcome of a referral to FAP but can have confidence that reporting is the right thing to do when the safety of a child is in question.

- When a military parent is involved, commanders have sole discretion in determining any administrative or disciplinary action. The commander will consider advice from legal counsel and evidence presented by law enforcement before making a decision.
- When a staff member at a DoD-sponsored facility or activity is involved, the DoD-sponsored facility or activity leadership will work with the servicing personnel and legal offices to determine a course of action.