

PROTECTING CHILDREN



Resource Guide



“You have access to resources and protections that can make a difference in a child’s life. We want to help you understand the importance of these protections, as well as your role in preventing and reporting child abuse.”

Jeff Coleman, Program Host



DEFINING TERMS: WHAT IS ABUSE?

Anyone under the age of 18 who is caused harm by a parent, guardian or other person having custody or control of that minor.¹

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF ABUSE?

- **Neglect** is the failure to meet a child’s basic needs: physically, medically or emotionally.
- **Physical Abuse** is the intentional or reckless use of physical force that results in injury or risk of injury.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the practice of behaviors that harm a child’s self-worth or emotional well-being.
- **Sexual Abuse** is engaging in sexual acts with a child.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

As a governmental official, employee or volunteer, you are legally required to report suspected child abuse. New Jersey law provides that: “Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child is being subjected to abuse shall report this immediately.” Failure to report is a misdemeanor and can expose you to a lawsuit for damages.

¹ NJSA 9:6-8.21

ABUSE IN NEW JERSEY: BY THE NUMBERS

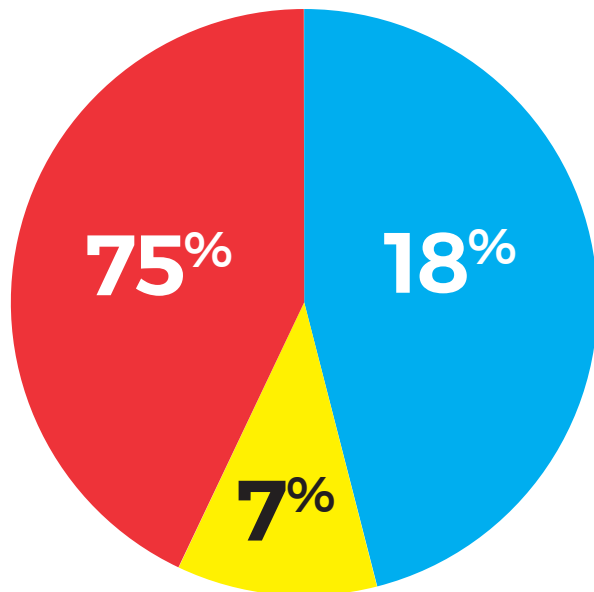
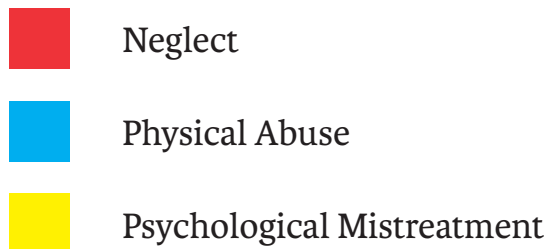
80,000

annual instances
of reported
child abuse.

50,000

of those children
receive prevention
and post-response
services.²

BREAKING IT DOWN BY ABUSE REPORTS



The Department of Children and Families maintains a hotline to report child abuse.

1 877 NJ ABUSE (652-2873).

Any person who, in good faith, reports suspected abuse or testifies in a child abuse hearing is immune to any criminal or civil liability that may result. You can choose anonymous reporting as well.

30%

of these abused children will later abuse their own children, creating a generational cycle of abuse.

TEN ACTIONS ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS MUST TAKE TO PROTECT CHILDREN:

1. Background checks of all prospective employees and volunteers.
2. Training for all officials, employees and volunteers, beginning with elected officials.
3. A written protocol for notifying the parents or guardian of a minor in case of an emergency, whether medical or behavioral, natural disaster, or any other disruption.
4. Medical treatment authorization forms.
5. A policy that forbids the release of children to anyone other than the parent, guardian, or another authorized adult.
6. Policies that prohibit staff or volunteers from transporting children in their own vehicles without written authorization. Police agencies also must adopt specific procedures for the transportation of minors.
7. Strong policies forbidding staff and volunteers from meeting with a child alone and in private.
8. Guidelines that restrict images taken of children as part of an activity from being shared on social media or any other platform without expressed consent from parents and guardians.
9. Anti-Hazing and bullying policies that cover cyberbullying.
10. Procedures for the monitoring of bathroom facilities.

Go to NJMEL.ORG for a complete model policy and procedures.

For more information about your policy contact: