

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

DEPARTMENT POLICY: DCF.P-Misc.06-2007

EFFECTIVE: August 31, 2007

SUBJECT: **Child Abuse or Neglect**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to advise Department and Provider Agency personnel of the policy and procedures to be followed in the reporting of incidents of child abuse or neglect, whether such report is based on a suspicion or a reasonable cause to believe.

**II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Provider Agencies.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this directive, the following items shall be defined as follows:

Abused Child, as defined in N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.9, means a child under the age of 18 years:

- A. Whose parent, guardian or other person(s) having custody and control inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury by other than accidental means which causes or creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health or impairment of the function of any body part;
- B. Whose parent, guardian or other person(s) having custody and control creates or allows to be created a substantial or ongoing risk of physical injury to such child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement or impairment of the function of any body part;
- C. Whose parent, guardian or other person(s) having custody and control commits or allows to be committed an act of sexual abuse against the child;
- D. Whose physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired as the result of the failure of his/her parent, guardian or such other person(s) having custody and control, to exercise a minimum degree of care: (1) in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical or surgical care though financially able to

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do so or though offered financial or other reasonable means to do so, or (2) in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship, by unreasonably inflicting or allowing to be inflicted harm, or substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment, or by any other act of similarly serious nature requiring the aid of the court; or

- E. Who has been willfully abandoned by his/her parent, guardian or by such other person(s) having custody and control.

**IV. POLICY**

- A. It is the responsibility of the Department of Children and Families to ensure that services to clients are provided in a safe and secure environment. A major emphasis of the Department is to put an obligation on any Department or Provider Agency personnel who even suspect that a child may be abused or neglected while under the care and/or supervision of the Provider Agency, to report the incident immediately to the Department's State Central Registry. This immediate response will help to ensure the safety and well being of the child in question as well as facilitate an investigation.
- B. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10, 8.14 and 2C:43-3 and 8, any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect is legally obligated to report any and all information regarding the incident or incidents to the Division of Youth and Family Services. Failure to report is a disorderly persons offense. A person convicted of a disorderly persons offense may be fined up to \$1,000 and may be sentenced to up to six months in jail.
- C. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.13, anyone acting pursuant to this Act in making a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such person shall have the same immunity with respect to testimony given in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

**V. PROCEDURES**

Reporting Requirements

- A. Incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect involving Provider Agency staff with children under their care and/or supervision must be reported immediately to the State Central Registry, 1-877-NJ-ABUSE. If the child is in immediate danger, 911 must also be called.

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- B. Provider Agency staff having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected in the child's own home shall promptly report the incident(s) to the State Central Registry, 1-877-NJ-ABUSE. If the child is in immediate danger, Provider Agency staff must also call 911.
- C. When making a report, the reporting person shall provide, whenever possible, the following information:
1. the name and approximate age of the child;
  2. the name and address of the parent or guardian of the child;
  3. the name and location of the Provider Agency;
  4. a description of the child's present condition and the nature and extent of the abuse or neglect to which s/he has been subjected, including an indication of the seriousness of the situation and whether the child appears to be in immediate or imminent danger; and
  5. the name of the alleged perpetrator and any other information known concerning the circumstances of the suspected abuse or neglect.

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Commissioner