



## Reporting a Child Abuse/Or Suspected Child Abuse

### Duty to Report Abuse or Suspected Abuse

“Anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or there is substantial risk that a child will be abused or neglected by a parent/guardian has a legal duty under the *Child, Youth and Family Act* to promptly report the matter to a caseworker.” (Government of Alberta, 2005).

“**Child abuse**, as defined by the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and where child intervention services may become involved, is any act of maltreatment of a child by a parent or guardian that results in injury or harm. The four main types of abuse are: 1) neglect 2) emotional injury 3) physical abuse 4) sexual abuse. Child abuse by someone other than a parent or guardian should be reported to the police.” (Province of Alberta, 2009).

### **When talking to a child, keep in mind**

- If a child discloses abuse, do **NOT** probe for details or perform an interview. Detailed questioning is to be left to the caseworker and police;
- Listen to the information provided and record it as soon as possible in the child’s own words;
- Be supportive and let the child know it is right to tell someone; and
- Find a quiet private place to listen. Keep notes and information confidential.

### **Provide care/treatment**

Provide treatment for any injuries or illness the child presents with or send out for further treatment if warranted. For example: sexual abuse, severe illness or injury.

### **How to report child abuse or suspected abuse in the community:**

#### **Important to note:**

- If a child is brought in by a parent or guardian who is the suspected abuser, another responsible adult must accompany the child.
- If the child abuse is by someone **OTHER** than a parent or guardian, it should be reported to the police.
- If there are any questions of whether to report a case, contact a caseworker at Mamawi Awacis Society  
Phone: # 780-659-3248 or the Northern Alberta Child Intervention Services: 1-800-638-0715 or 780-422-2001

### **Information to provide the caseworker**

- Your name, phone number, relationship to the child, child’s name, address, DOB, and location.
- Information about the situation, details of disclosure, including place and time of incident.
- Any immediate concerns about the child’s safety.
- The name and address of the alleged perpetrator and any identifying information.
- Your own observations or other indicators of abuse (See Recognizing Child Abuse, pages 5 – 10, in *Responding to Child Abuse Handbook, Government of Alberta.*) – Kept in NIC office.
- Any other relevant information concerning the child and/or family.

**To maintain confidentiality, only chart in the client’s chart, document pertinent information and direct quotes, as well as exact time and date that the caseworker was notified and whom you spoke with.**

### **The Caseworker will**

- Determine whether the child can benefit from family enhancement services or protection services;
- Contact the police, if a criminal investigation is required; and/or
- Co-ordinate a response with other agencies, if necessary, and ensures child has a safe place to go.

*“Thorough and precise documentation is necessary in all matters of suspected abuse or neglect. The health professional may be required to give evidence in a court of law at a later date.” (Government of Alberta, 2005)*

### **References and additional information**

Province of Alberta (2009). *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act Chapter c-12*, Queens Printer, Edmonton; revisions SA2008c31 (Mar2009)  
Government of Alberta (2005). *Responding to Child Abuse: A Handbook*, Queens Printer, Edmonton.  
Public Health Agency of Canada (2012). *Child Maltreatment: A “What to Do” Guide for Professionals Who Work With Children*.  
Alberta Treatment Guidelines for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) in Adolescents and Adults (2012) Government of Alberta.