Purpose of Mandated Reporter Training

- Provide Information
- To keep you up to date with your roles, responsibilities and changes in the law and possible preventive measures you can take to protect yourselves as well as the children and families you serve
- To hear concerns, answer questions and develop ways to work together to better protect children
The law requires certain professionals who have some degree of contact with Children to report suspected abuse, neglect, and at-risk situations to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). These persons are called mandated reporters and they must make an oral report within 24 hours of suspecting the problem, with a written follow-up 48 hours after that. People who fail to report can be fined up to $500. Reporters call a dedicated, toll-free hotline (1-800-842-2288) to make reports.
Who Must Report

Connecticut General Statutes (state law) identifies professionals, who because their work involves regular contact with children, are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect.
Who Must Report (Mandated Reporters)

- Any person paid to care for a child in any public or private facility, child day care center, group day care home or family day care home which is licensed by the state
- Battered Women’s Counselors, Certified/Licensed substance abuse counselor
- Chiropractor
- Clergy
- Day care center
- Dentists, dental hygienists
- DCF Employees
- Department of Public Health employees who license day cares or youth camps
- Family Day Care Home
- Licensed Foster Parents
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists
- Resident Interns, Resident Physicians
- Physicians, Practical Nurses, Surgeons
- Licensed Professional Counselors
- Emergency Medical Service Providers
- Medical Examiners
- Mental Health Professionals
- Optometrists, Osteopath
- Parole Officers, Probation Officers
- Persons paid for caring for children in any public or private facility
- Pharmacists, Physical Therapists, Physician’s Assistants, Podiatrists
- Police Officers
- Psychologists
- Registered Nurses
- School Coaches, school guidance counselors, school paraprofessionals, Principals, Superintendents, Teachers
- Sexual Assault Counselors
- Social Workers
- The Child Advocate and any employee of the Office of the Child Advocate
When Does A Report Need to Be Made?

By law, a mandated reporter must report to either DCF or the local law enforcement agency when, acting in their professional capacity, they have Reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18

1. Has suffered non-accidental physical injury, an injury which is at odds with the given history, or is in a condition resulting from maltreatment, such as malnutrition, by the person responsible for his/her health, welfare, or care, or by someone to whom the responsible person gave access;

2. Has been placed by the responsible person at imminent risk of serious harm by an act or failure to act; or

3. Has been neglected
   (Connecticut General Statutes 46b-120)
Remember:

A Mandated Reporter **must** report any suspicion to DCF or law enforcement regardless of the identity of the alleged perpetrator.
Reasonable Cause to Suspect

- Observed
- What is Told or Said
- Knowledge from Professional Training and Experience
- A suspicion is enough to file a report based on what you observe or are told

CERTAINTY IS NOT REQUIRED
Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

**Child Abuse:** any child or youth who has a non-accidental physical injury, or injuries which do not make sense given the child’s history, or is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as, but limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

**Child Neglect:** any child or youth who has been abandoned or is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally, or morally or is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to his well-being.

**Exception:** The treatment of any child by an accredited Christian Science practitioner shall not of itself constitute neglect or maltreatment.
Lovon C. vs DCF

- The child’s misbehavior and the surrounding circumstances, including the parent’s motive
- The type of punishment administered
- The amount of force used; and
- The child’s age, size, and ability to understand the punishment
Who does DCF investigate?

The Department will investigate cases where the abuse or neglect has been inflicted by or caused by a person responsible or entrusted for such a child’s health, welfare or care or by a person given such access to such child by such person responsible. All other reports will be referred to the appropriate local law enforcement authority.
“Person Responsible”

- Parent
- Guardian
- Foster Parent
- School Employees
- Staff personnel of child center based, family or group day care settings
- Staff employees of residential child care settings
“Person Entrusted”

- Anyone given access to child or youth by a person who is responsible for the health, welfare or care of a child or youth.
- For the purpose of providing education, child care, counseling, spiritual guidance, coaching, training, instruction, tutoring or mentoring of such child or youth.
Guidelines For Making A Report

- An oral report must be made to DCF or the local law enforcement as soon as possible, but not later than 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected.

- A written report (DCF-136 form) must be submitted to DCF within 48 hours of making an oral report (http://www.state.ct.us/dcf/HOTLINE.htm).
Who To Contact

DCF HOTLINE 1-800-842-2288

The Department has a single point of contact statewide for the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. **The Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline** operates **24 hours a day and seven days a week**. DCF is required to tape record all reports to the hotline.
What Information Needs To Be Reported?

- Names and addresses of the child and his/her parent(s) or responsible caregiver(s)
- Child’s age and gender
- Nature and extent of injury, maltreatment, or neglect
- Approximated date and time the injury, maltreatment or neglect occurred
What Information Needs To Be Reported?

- The circumstances in which the injuries, maltreatment or neglect became known to the reporter
- Previous injury, maltreatment or neglect of the child or siblings
- Name of the person suspected to have caused the injury, maltreatment or neglect
- Any action taken to treat or help the child
- Any other information the reporter believes would be helpful
When DCF notifies the Police

When DCF receives a report alleging sexual abuse or serious physical abuse, including (but not limited to) a report the child has:

- Died;
- Been sexually assaulted;
- Suffered brain damage, loss or serious impairment of a bodily function or organ;
- Been sexually exploited; or
- Suffered serious non-accidental physical injury

*DCF will notify the appropriate police department within 12 hours of receipt of such report.*
Protection For Reporters

The law protects mandated reporters who report in good faith and Punishes those who knowingly make false reports.

• It prohibits employers from discriminating, discharging, or retaliating against an employee who makes a good faith report or who testifies or is about to testify in any abuse or neglect proceeding. Civil penalties of up to $2,500 can be levied against violating employers.

• Immunity from any civil liability is granted to people who make required reports in good faith.

• Immunity is also granted to people who in good faith have not reported, however,
Penalties For Failing To Report or For Making False Reports

- failure to report could result in fines, which range from $500 to $2,500 and the individual will be required to participate in an educational and training program. In addition, mandated reporters could also be sued for damages if further injury is caused to the child because they did not act.

- Anyone who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be fined up to $2000 or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both. The identity of any such person shall be disclosed to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the perpetrator of alleged abuse.
What Happens After a Report Has Been Made?

DCF is responsible for immediately evaluating and classifying all reports of suspected abuse/neglect/imminent risk. If the report contains information to warrant an investigation, DCF must make its best effort to begin an investigation within 2 hours if there is an imminent risk of physical harm to a child or another emergency; and within 3 days for all other reports. In all cases, DCF must complete the investigation in 30 calendar days.

When conducting a child abuse/neglect investigation, DCF or a law enforcement agency must coordinate activities to minimize the number of interviews with any child.
What Happens After a Report Has Been Made?

DCF must obtain consent from the parent/guardian of the child for any interview, unless DCF has reason to believe such person or member of the child’s household is the alleged perpetrator. When such consent is not required, the interview must be conducted in the presence of a ‘disinterested adult’ (typically, someone who is impartial and has no self-interest in the case). If a disinterested adult is not available after reasonable search and immediate access is necessary to protect the child from imminent risk of serious harm, DCF or a law enforcement agency will still interview the child.

If, after the investigation has been completed, serious physical abuse or sexual abuse is substantiated, DCF must notify the local police, and either the Chief State’s Attorney/designee or a state’s attorney in the judicial district where the child lives or in which the abuse occurred. A copy of the investigation report must also be sent.
What Happens After a Report Has Been Made?

In situations where it has been determined that an investigation is not warranted, the Hotline worker may refer the caller to an appropriate service program in his/her community.

If child abuse or neglect is substantiated, a case may be opened by the Department for Protective Services and serviced by staff from the DCF Regional Office or sub-office covering the child’s hometown.
Mandated Reporters are required to give their name when they make a report to DCF, however, reporters can request anonymity to protect their privacy. This means DCF would not disclose their name or identity unless mandated to do so by law (Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 17a-28 and 17a-101). Unless a reporter gives written consent, his or her name will not be disclosed except to:

• a DCF employee
• a law enforcement officer
• an appropriate state's attorney
• an appropriate assistant attorney general
• a judge and all necessary parties in a court proceeding
• a state child care licensing agency, executive director of any institution, school or facility or superintendent of schools
Do Mandated Reporters Have To Inform The Parents A Report Was Made?

A Mandated reporter has no legal obligation to tell the child’s parents a report has been made to DCF. In certain circumstances, though, it may be beneficial to tell the parent:

• When a child is suspected of being abused, neglected or placed at imminent risk of serious harm by staff in a school or institution that cares for the child, the person in charge of the facility has to notify the child’s parent/guardian that a report has been made. DCF contacts the head of such school or facility to inform them a report has been made.

• Health care professionals likely will need to talk to parents to assess the cause of the child’s injury(ies). Mental health professionals or members of the clergy may want to talk to the parents to offer support and guidance.
Tips On How To Respond To A Child Who Reports Abuse

- Tell the child you believe them and will contact someone who can help
- Respect the child’s privacy, he/she will have to give details later so don’t press for them
- You only need to suspect abuse to report it
- Don’t show horror, shock, or disapproval of the parents, child, or situation
- Don’t place blame or make judgments
Non-Mandatory Reporters

- Anyone other than a mandated reporter can also make a report, either verbally or in writing. The DCF Commissioner must use his/her best efforts to get the reporter’s name and address, but the person does have the option of remaining anonymous.

- Mandated reporters who, outside of the ordinary course of their employment or profession, have reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the age of 18 is in imminent risk of being abused or has been abused/neglected, can and should make a report to the Hotline.
Questions and Comments
Bibliography

Information used as resources for this powerpoint include: CT General Statute (state law), DCF Training Academy, and DCF website.
Mandated Reporter Quiz

1. Who is a mandated reporter?
   A) Any librarian at a town library
   B) Persons paid for caring for children in any public or private facility
   C) A store clerk in a toy store
   D) the child’s parent

2. An oral report must be made as soon as possible, but not later than:
   A) 24 hours of suspecting a child has been abused/neglected
   B) 12 hours of suspecting abuse, unless it is the weekend
   C) 2 hours of suspecting abuse/neglect
   D) 12 hours of suspecting abuse/neglect regardless of time of week
Mandated Reporter Quiz

3. Who can a mandated reporter contact to make a report?
   A) The local law enforcement agency
   B) Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline
   C) Either the local law enforcement agency or the Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline
   D) A co-worker

4. TRUE or FALSE: A written report must be submitted to DCF within 48 hours of making an oral report.
5. In which situations should a report be made?

A) A child is not being given his seizure medication as prescribed.
B) A child has strange bruises all over her body that are unexplainable.
C) A healthy child has not been attending school for several days.
D) A child reports he has been touched inappropriately in a private area.
E) All of the above

6. What information must be reported?

A) Name, address, school the child attends
B) Name, address, age, gender, nature of injury/neglect, date & time it occurred, how the reporter found out, previous incidents of abuse or neglect, action taken to help the child, any other helpful information
C) Only the type of abuse or neglect that occurred to protect the child’s confidentiality.
D) None of the above.
Mandated Reporter Quiz

7. TRUE or FALSE: There are laws to protect mandated reporters who make a report in good faith from being sued or wrongfully fired from their job.

8. Anyone who knowingly makes a false report:
   
   A) Shall be fined up to $2000.00 or imprisoned for not more than one year (or both)
   B) Shall have their identity disclosed to the appropriate law enforcement agency
   C) Shall have their identity disclosed to the perpetrator of alleged abuse
   D) All of the above
9. TRUE or FALSE: Mandated Reporters can request staying anonymous to protect their identity.

10. What is the penalty for a mandated reporter not reporting when they were aware of abuse or neglect of a child?

   A) A fine between $500.00 to $2,500.00 and a requirement to participate in an educational and training program
   B) Imprisonment of one year
   C) They will receive a written warning from DCF
   D) 200 hours of community service