

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PRIMER



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

**To Report Suspected
Child Abuse Call**

ChildLine

800-932-0313

(24 hours/7 days-a-week)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why Should I Be Concerned with Child Abuse?	2
What is Child Abuse?	3
What Are the Signs of Child Abuse?	5
What Can I Do?	6
What Happens After a Report Is Made?	8
Student Abuse	10
Services Provided To Children And Families	11
Assessment and Intervention Flow Chart	15
Resource List	16

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED WITH CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse affects all of us. Abused children come from all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. We read about it in the paper; we see it on the television news. We think it couldn't happen to our child, to our relative's children, to our neighbor's children. It does happen to children we know and the effects can be devastating.

Abused children often suffer from emotional, physical, social and academic problems. Without intervention, these children can endure the effects of abuse for the rest of their lives. Sometimes as adults they commit crimes, have difficulty functioning in society or become abusive themselves.

With help, families can resolve the problems that led to abuse. With help, victims of abuse can begin to heal, emotionally and physically. With help, the cycle of abuse can be broken.



WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

**HARM TO A CHILD UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE
THAT RESULTS FROM CAREGIVER
OR FAMILY PROBLEMS OR ACTIONS.**

In Pennsylvania, the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) (23 Pa. C.S., Chapter 63) establishes definitions of child abuse. An incident of child abuse must involve a child, a perpetrator and an act of abuse as defined below:

Child - person who is under the age of 18.

Perpetrator - person who has committed child abuse and is:

- A parent of a child.
- A paramour of a child's parent.
- An individual 14 years of age or older residing in the same home as the child.
- A person responsible for the child's welfare.

Types of Abuse

Physical abuse - A recent act (within the past two years) or failure to act which causes a non-accidental serious physical injury that causes the child severe pain or significantly impairs the child's functioning, either temporarily or permanently.

Sexual Abuse - An act or failure to act that results in the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any

explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault or other form of sexual exploitation of children.

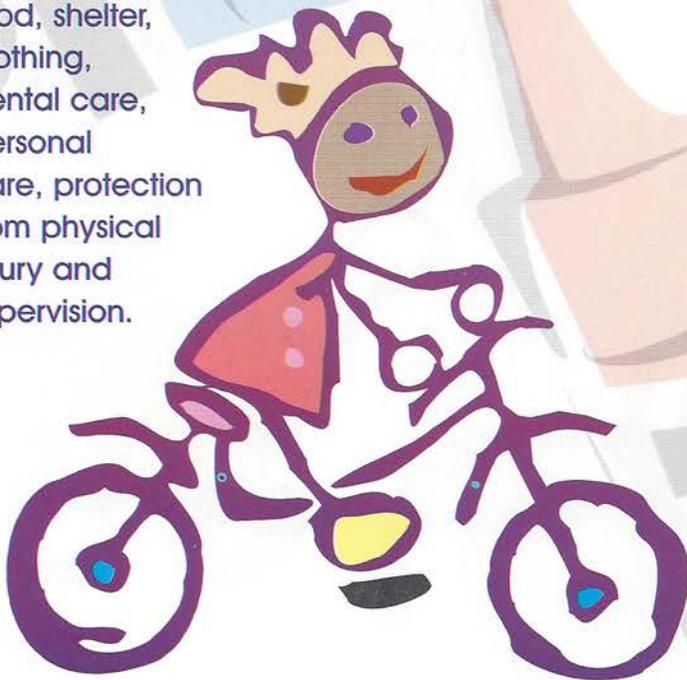
What is Child Abuse?.....Continued

Mental Abuse - An act or failure to act that results in a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment that:

- Renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic, or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
- Seriously interferes with the child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

Serious Physical Neglect - A prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide the essentials of life including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning. Other essentials include food, shelter, clothing, dental care, personal care, protection from physical injury and supervision.

Imminent Risk - An act or recent act or failure to act or series of such which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to a child.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE?

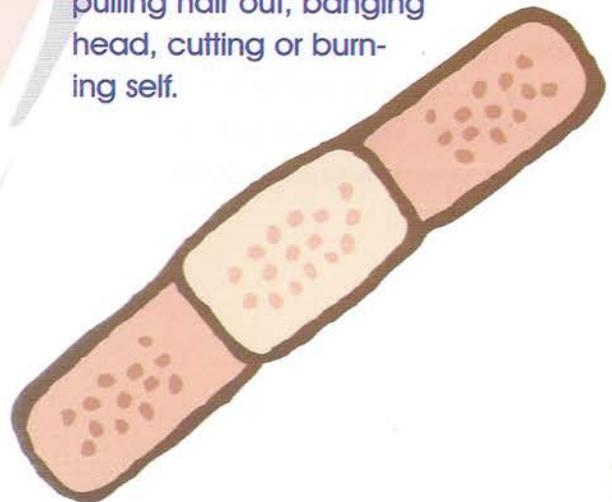
There are no specific signs or group of signs that will tell you a child has been abused. The signs listed below can also be observed in children who have not been abused; however, these signs often are seen in abused children. Children grow and develop at their own pace. When assessing these signs in a child, it is important to know what behaviors are out of the ordinary for that particular child.

Physical signs

- Unexplained injury or pain or the explanation of an injury changes over time;
- Unusual or frequent bruises, welts or burns;
- Injuries that are inconsistent with the explanation or with the child's development level;
- Inadequate dress for the weather (either overdressed for warm weather or underdressed for cold weather);
- Poor hygiene;
- Frequently wears dirty clothes;
- Discomfort walking or sitting;
- Unusual discharge or odor around genitals;
- Frequent urinary tract infections or genital rashes;
- Diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease; and
- Sudden weight loss or gain.

Behavioral signs

- Depression, anxiety, low self-esteem;
- Behavior extremes (aggressive, withdrawn);
- Child's behavior regresses to an earlier developmental level;
- Excessive or inappropriate fears (suddenly afraid of a familiar person or place or activity);
- Runs away;
- Academic and behavior problems in school;
- Avoids school or is truant from school;
- Difficulty making or maintaining friendships;
- Sleep and appetite patterns change;
- Inappropriate emotional responses and/or has difficulty expressing emotion;
- Masturbates frequently;
- Sexual knowledge beyond age expectations;
- Acts out sexually on others;
- Preoccupied with sex;
- Takes on a parental role; and
- Self-abusive behaviors such as pulling hair out, banging head, cutting or burning self.



WHAT CAN I DO?

If you suspect a child has been abused, report your suspicion. Each county has a local children and youth agency that is responsible for investigating reports of suspected child abuse. Even if you have reported the abuse before and you still have concerns, keep reporting. The children and youth agency needs to know if the situation hasn't improved. We all must work together with a common goal — the safety of the child.

Where can I report the abuse?

ChildLine –1-800-932-0313 - A toll-free, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week hotline established by Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare to receive reports of suspected abuse and neglect of children. The reports are forwarded to the local children and youth agency for investigation.

Children and Youth Agency - Each children and youth agency is responsible for investigating the reports and providing services to abused and neglected children and their families to prevent further abuse. Your local children and youth agency can be found at the end of this primer under "Resource List" or in the blue pages of your telephone book.

If the child is currently in imminent danger, the abuse is occurring right now or the children are home alone and unable to care for themselves, **call 911 immediately.**

You are protected.

Anyone who makes a report in good faith is protected under the Child Protective Services Law from criminal and civil immunity. You may choose to make a report anonymously; however, providing your name for the children and youth agency assists the agency if they have any questions about the report or need to verify information.

Mandated Reporters

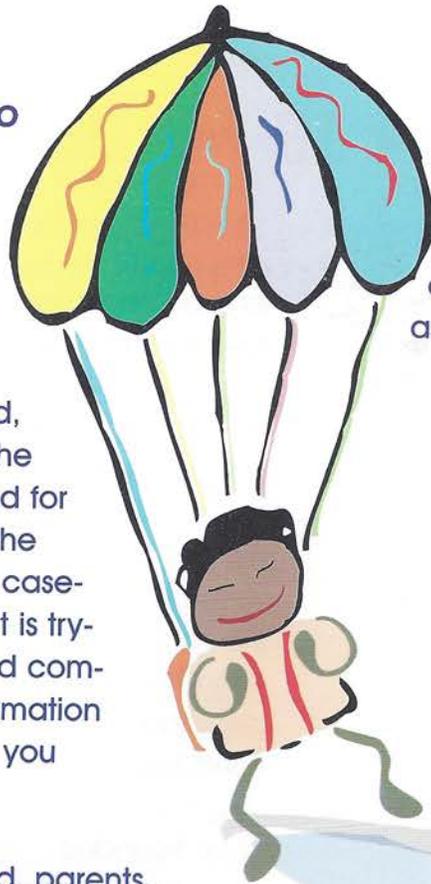
People, who through the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession come into contact with children, are required to report when they suspect the child coming before them has been abused. Mandated reporters include doctors, nurses, school personnel, therapists, day care staff, dentists, police officers and mental health professionals. Although mandated reporters are required to report suspected abuse to ChildLine, anyone may make a report of suspected abuse.

What information do I need?

When you make a report of suspected abuse, you will be asked for identifying information on the child, the child's family and the alleged perpetrator and for information regarding the suspected abuse. The caseworker taking the report is trying to get accurate and complete information. Information the caseworker will ask you includes:

- Names of the child, parents, siblings and alleged perpetrator;
- Birthdates (if unknown, approximate ages);
- Addresses (if unknown, directions to the home);
- Phone numbers;
- Nature of the incident (what happened, when, where, who was involved);
- How did you become aware of incident (witness, told by someone else); and
- Factors that put the child at risk (continuing contact with the alleged perpetrator, disabilities or limitations, history of domestic violence).

You do not need to have all of the above information to make a report. The more accurate information you can provide, the better equipped the children and youth agency will be to assess the child's risk.



WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REPORT IS MADE?

The children and youth agency receives reports in two ways; directly to the agency or through ChildLine. The children and youth agency has 24 hours to begin its investigation and see the child. If they cannot determine from the report that the child is safe they must immediately begin the investigation and immediately see the child.

After the safety of and risk of harm to the child and any other children in the home is assessed, the children and youth agency will determine if the child was abused according to the definitions previously listed (see section "What is child abuse?"). A trained child protective services caseworker will interview the child, parents and alleged perpetrator. Witnesses to the incident also may be interviewed. The person who made the report may be contacted to verify information or to obtain more information. If appropriate, the child could be examined by a doctor.

During the investigation, the children and youth agency identifies factors associated with the alleged incident and other issues that may exist that have an impact on family functioning. The family's need for services also is assessed. Services are either provided through the children and youth agency or community agencies. The costs for services are either free or based on the family's ability to pay. Services can include counseling, classes

to strengthen parenting skills, self-help groups and emergency medical services.

The investigation is completed typically within 30 days and the results are submitted to ChildLine. If the investigation cannot be completed within 30 days, the children and youth agency must document the reasons and complete the investigation within 60 days. The terms used to describe the results of the investigation are listed below:

- **Founded** - There has been a judicial adjudication that the child has been abused.
- **Indicated** - The children and youth agency found that abuse occurred based on medical evidence, the investigation or admission by the perpetrator.
- **Substantiated** - Cases that have been indicated or founded.
- **Unfounded** - Cases where there is a lack of evidence that the child was abused or it was determined that the child was not abused. (An unfounded status does not always mean that the incident did not occur. For example, the child may have received an injury from being struck as alleged, but the injury did not meet the definition of serious physical injury).

The children and youth agency will work with families where there is a risk of abuse to decrease the risk factors by providing them with counseling, education and other supportive services. Cases where the report is unfounded but a need for services exists are handled in two ways depending upon the risk to the child.

Cases where the risk is greater are opened under general protective services and a family service plan that identifies goals and services for the family is developed. Cases where the risk of abuse is low may be closed and the family referred to services within the community for assistance.

At the end of the investigation the risk of harm to the child and other children in the home is again assessed. The resulting information is used to determine whether the case will be opened, closed with referrals for service or closed without referrals.

If the children and youth agency determines that the child is in immediate danger and the only way to assure the child's safety is to remove the child from the home, the agency must seek a court order to remove the child. The first option for placement is with a willing and capable relative. If this is not possible, the child may be placed in an agency-approved foster home or residential facility. The children and youth agency also may petition the court if the family refuses to cooperate with the investigation.

GENERAL PROTECTIVE SERVICES

The majority of reports that come to the attention of the children and youth agency involve non-serious injury or neglect. These cases are treated by the agency as general protective services

cases. General protective services cases can include inadequate shelter, truancy, inappropriate discipline, hygiene issues, abandonment or other problems that threaten a child's opportunity for healthy growth and development.

When a report alleging the need for general protective services is received the children and youth agency conducts an assessment to determine the child or children's safety and whether or not the family is in need of services. If the safety of the children in the home cannot be determined, the county agency sees the child immediately. Otherwise, the agency prioritizes the response time based on the risk of the children.

Within 60-calendar days, the caseworker completes the assessment to determine if the family will be accepted for services, referred to a community agency for services or to close the case. During the assessment period, the caseworker visits the family's home as often as necessary to complete the assessment and to assure the safety of the children. The caseworker may make unannounced home visits. Additionally, services will be provided or arranged to assure the safety of the children during the assessment period.

Based on the assessment, the family is accepted for general protective services, referred to a community agency or the case is closed. The children and youth agency may petition the court if the agency determines that general protective services are in the best interest of the children and an offer of an assessment, home visit or services is refused by the parent.

STUDENT ABUSE

Amendments to the CPSL known as Act 151 of 1994 gave county children and youth agencies jurisdiction to investigate reports of suspected student abuse. Student abuse is committed when a school employee inflicts serious bodily injury or sexual abuse or exploitation on a student. The CPSL defines serious bodily injury as an injury that creates a substantial risk of death or causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of function of any bodily member or organ.

Suspected student abuse is reported differently than suspected child abuse. When a school employee becomes aware of a suspected student abuse, the school employee immediately informs the administrator. The administrator is mandated to immediately report the incident to law enforcement officials and the appropriate district attorney. If local law enforcement officials have reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of an initial interview, that evidence of suspected student abuse exists, the local law enforcement officials shall notify the county children and youth agency.

The county children and youth agency has 60 days to complete its investigation and to determine the status of the report. The status determinations are the same as those of child abuse. The status determination of the report could be founded,



indicated or unfounded. (Please see Section entitled "What Happens After A Report Is Made" for explanation of status determination.) To the fullest extent possible, the county agency is required to coordinate its investigation with law enforcement officials. The student must be interviewed jointly by law enforcement officials and the county children and youth agency. The school employee may be interviewed by law enforcement officials before the county children and youth agency has any contact with the school employee.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Each county, through its children and youth agency, is responsible for developing and providing services designed to treat and prevent child abuse, neglect and exploitation including services to help overcome problems that result in dependency and delinquency. The county children and youth program includes:

- Services to parents and children to enable children to remain safely in their own homes and communities;
- Temporary placement service for children who cannot live safely with their own families;
- Services designed to reunite children and their families when children are in temporary placement;
- Adoption services and adoption assistance to provide a permanent family for any child who cannot be returned to his family; and
- Any service or care ordered by the court for children who have been adjudicated dependent or delinquent.

Services are provided to children and families who have been accepted for service by the county children and youth agency. Services also are provided to those persons for whom the court orders services. In most cases, the county agency determines who will be accepted for service based on its evaluation of the

family's problems. Some families are self-referred, but most are referred by neighbors, relatives and other agencies.

Services are provided to both parents and children to enable children to safely remain in their own home. Some of these services include protective supervision, counseling, parenting education and other skills training. Most in-home services are provided without regard to cost although agencies may charge a fee based on the family's ability to pay.

When children cannot safely be permitted to stay in their own homes, the children and youth agency will petition the court for placement. If placement with an appropriate relative is not available, placement is provided in a children and youth agency or private agency foster homes and residential facilities.

A family continues to receive services as long as the agency or the court feels there is significant risk to the health and safety of the child.

County children and youth agencies provide the following 18 specific services to meet the needs of children, as provided by state laws.

- Information and Referral Service - The direct provision of information about services and related service programs

Services Provided.....Continued

to all individuals requesting it. These are services that can be provided before any intake procedures are initiated and include the referral to community resources for the needed service and follow-up to assure that contact has been made.

- Protective Services (Child Abuse) -

Services provided to children reported as seriously abused and to their families as required by the Child Protective Services Law to protect children from further abuse.

- Protective Services (General) - Service activities provided to protect the safety, health and welfare of children when parents fail or are unable to provide their children with adequate food, clothing, shelter, care or protection. These activities are provided to children and families when the children have been neglected, exploited or injured by their parents and the situation does not rise to the level of child abuse as defined by the Child Protective Services Law. Services also are provided in situations where children are beyond the control of their parents.

- Service Planning - A series of coordinated staff activities to determine what services are needed, to develop a service plan and to arrange for the provision of needed services.

- Counseling/Intervention Services -

Supportive and therapeutic activities provided to children and families directed at preventing or alleviating conditions, including crisis conditions, that present a risk to the safety or well-being of children by improving problem-solving and coping skills, interpersonal functioning, the stability of the family or the capacity of the family to function independently.

- Homemaker/Caretaker Service - Home

help, home care skills instruction and child care and supervision provided to a child and the child's family in the child's home by a trained homemaker or caretaker.

- Life Skills Education - Practical education and training to children and families, either in or outside of their own homes in skills needed to perform the activities of daily living including, but not limited to, child care and parenting education, home management and related functions.

- Day Care Service - Out-of-home care for children for part of a 24-hour day provided in day care centers, group day care homes and family day care homes as part of a family service plan to prevent removal of a child from his parents' custody or as a part of the process of reestablishing a child with his family following an out-of-home placement.



- Day Treatment Service - Intensive services provided to a child for part of a day. These activities are designed to provide supervision and counseling of the child and coordination of the range of related human services necessary to establish consistent developmental relationships and skills to enable the child to function in the community. They do not include the cost of juvenile probation services, education programs, primary health care programs and programs designed to treat the mental health needs of a child.
- Adoption Services - Activities designed to culminate in legal adoption of a child, including adoptive home recruitment, study of adoptive parent applicants, adoptive parent preparation, placement and supervision of the child in an adoptive home, preparation and presentation of material for the adoption hearing, ensuring adoption assistance when needed and supportive services to the adoptive family after placement.
- Adoption Assistance - A method for encouraging and promoting the placement in adoptive homes of children who are physically and/or mentally disabled, emotionally disturbed, or hard to place by virtue of age, sibling relationship or ethnicity. Adoption assistance may take the form of cash payments and/or health care services or other services provided under Adoption Assistance regulations.
- Emergency Shelter Service - Residential care and supervision in a non-secure setting, not to exceed 30 consecutive days, for a child:
 - (1) whose immediate safety, protection, and well-being requires removal from the child's home; or
 - (2) who would present a danger to himself or others or who would runaway if he were living at home.
- Foster Family Service - 24-hour per day residential care and supervision of a child in a foster family home.
- Community Residential Service and Group Home Service - 24-hour per day placement of a child in a non-secure facility that serves no more than 25 children. Basic services of the community, including schools, recreation and employment must be used as a part of the facility's program.

Services Provided.....Continued

- Supervised Independent Living Service - The provision of services to children to transition into independent living that may include the provision or arrangement of living quarters and/or social services designed to support and supervise children who are living on their own. The child may be in the custody of his parents, the children and youth agency or another agency or individual.
- Residential Service - 24-hour out-of-home care in a non-secure facility for children that does not meet the criteria for community residential service or emergency shelter service.
- Juvenile Detention Service - 24-hour per day temporary care, maintenance and supervision in a secure, licensed and approved detention facility for alleged or adjudicated delinquents who would present a danger to themselves or others and would abscond if they remained in their homes or were placed in emergency shelter care.
- Secure Residential Service - Placement of adjudicated delinquent children for residential care, supervision, and rehabilitation in a secure facility.

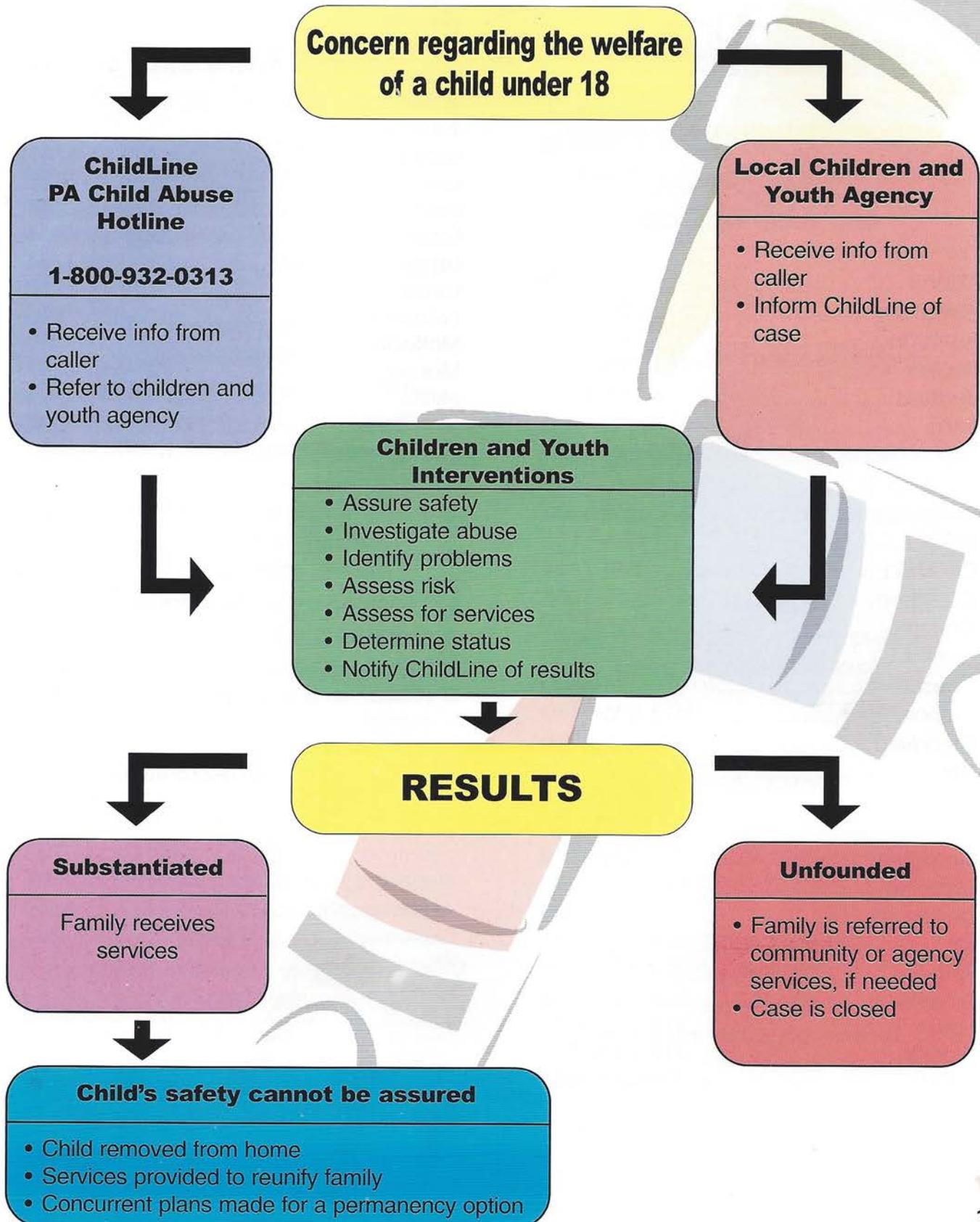
The children and youth agency provides services either directly through its own staff or by arranging or purchasing service through another agency.

Any service or facility used by a children and youth agency to provide children and youth services must meet state and local requirements for licensure or certification. All residential care facilities must meet applicable health and safety standards.

Each county is responsible for determining if any fees will be charged to clients and the amount of the fees. These charges must be established in writing and based on the client's ability to pay.



CHILD ABUSE ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION



RESOURCE LIST

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

ChildLine

1-800-932-0313

**24 hour toll-free to report
suspected child abuse and neglect**

County Children and Youth Agencies

Adams	717-337-0110	Greene	724-852-5217
Allegheny	412-350-5701	Huntingdon	814-643-3270
Armstrong	724-548-3466	Indiana	724-465-3895
Beaver	724-775-4510	Jefferson	814-849-3696
Bedford	814-623-4804	Juniata	717-436-7707
Berks	610-478-6700	Lackawanna	570-963-6781
Blair	814-693-3130	Lancaster.....	717-299-7925
Bradford	570-265-2154	Lawrence.....	724-658-2558
Bucks	215-348-6900	Lebanon	717-274-2801 ext.2304
Butler	724-284-5156	Lehigh	610-782-3064
Cambria	814-539-7454	Luzerne	570-826-8710
Cameron.....	814-486-3265	Lycoming.....	570-326-7895
Carbon	570-325-3644	McKean.....	814-887-3350
Centre	814-355-6755	Mercer.....	724-662-2703
Chester	610-344-5800	Mifflin.....	717-248-3994
Clarion.....	814-226-5150	Monroe	570-420-3590
Clearfield	800-326-9079	Montgomery	610-278-5800
Clinton.....	570-893-4100	Montour.....	570-271-3050
Columbia	570-389-5700	Northampton.....	610-559-3290
Crawford	814-336-4352	Northumberland	570-988-4237
Cumberland	717-240-6120	Perry	717-582-2131
Dauphin	717-780-7200	Philadelphia	215-683-6100
Delaware.....	610-713-2000	Pike	570-296-3446
Elk	814-776-1553	Potter	814-544-7315
Erie	814-451-6600	Schuylkill	570-837-4246
Fayette	724-430-1283	Snyder	570-837-4246
Forest.....	814-755-3622	Somerset	814-445-1600
Franklin	717-263-1900	Sullivan	570-946-4250
Fulton.....	717-485-3553	Susquehanna	570-278-4600 ext. 300
		Tioga	570-724-5766
		Union	570-522-1330
		Venango	814-432-9743
		Warren.....	814-726-2100
		Washington	724-228-6884
		Wayne	570-253-5972 ext. 224
		Westmoreland	724-830-3300
		Wyoming	570-836-3131
		York	717-846-8496

OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS

National Child Abuse Hotline

800-422-4453

24-hour crisis hotline offering support, information, literature and referrals.

National Center for Missing Children 800-843-5678

Information and assistance to parents of missing/abducted/runaway children. Takes information on sightings of missing children.

HELP FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Parents Anonymous

800-448-4906

Support groups for parents who are feeling overwhelmed and want to find better ways of parenting.

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

800-932-4632

Referrals to local domestic violence agencies. Comprehensive information and resources on policy development and technical assistance to enhance community response to and prevention of domestic violence.

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape

888-772-7227

Referrals to local rape crisis agencies through a statewide network of rape crisis centers, working in concert to administer comprehensive services in meeting the diverse needs of victims/survivors and to further provide prevention education to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence within their communities.

HEALTH CARE HELP FOR CHILDREN

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

800-986-5437

Information about obtaining health insurance for children of middle and low-income families.

Healthy Baby Line

800-986-2229

Information about obtaining prenatal health care for middle and low-income pregnant women.

Healthy Kids Line

800-986-5437

Information on obtaining health care services for middle and low-income families.

Special Kids Network

800-986-4550

Information about services for children with special health care needs.

The logo features a blue silhouette of the state of Pennsylvania above the text. The word "PENNSYLVANIA" is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Below it, "DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Improving the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians

Mark Schweiker
Governor

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Secretary

ChildLine 1-800-932-0313

www.dpw.state.pa.us