

Who must Report

- ▶ In accordance with Section 43-21-353 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated,
- ▶ "Any attorney, physician, dentist, intern, resident, nurse, psychologist, social worker, family protection worker, family protection specialist, child caregiver, minister, law enforcement officer, public or private school employee or any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child
- ▶ shall cause an oral report to be made immediately by telephone or otherwise and followed as soon thereafter as possible by a report in writing to the Department of Human Services

MISSISSIPPI Child Abuse Reporting Laws and Process

When to Report

- ▶ In accordance with Section 43-21-105 of the Mississippi Code of 1972,
- ▶ Annotated, "**Abused Child** means a child whose parent, guardian or custodian or any person responsible for his care or support, whether legally obligated to do so or not, **has caused or allowed to be caused upon said child sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, emotional abuse, mental injury, non-accidental physical injury or other maltreatment.**
- ▶ Provided, however that **physical discipline, including spanking, performed on a child by a parent, guardian or custodian in a reasonable manner shall not be deemed abuse under this section.**"

MISSISSIPPI Child Abuse Reporting Laws and Process

What to Report

In regard to physical abuse, it is important to understand that although parents, guardians and custodians are legally allowed to utilize corporal punishment, **they are not allowed to cause bruises, marks, or other injuries to children when utilizing corporal punishment. Any evidence of such will constitute abuse by the Mississippi Department of Human Services.**

MISSISSIPPI Child Abuse Reporting Laws and Process

How to Report

- ▶ A report must be made immediately to the **Hotline, 800-222-8000**, a statewide toll-free 24-hour line that is answered seven days a week.
- ▶ Call Mississippi Centralized Intake at (601) 432-4570
Non-emergency report at <https://reportabuse.mdcps.ms.gov/>
- ▶ When a child appears to be in immediate danger of serious harm, call 9-1-1 to ensure the fastest possible response time to protect the child. The person reporting should provide, whenever possible:
 - The child's name, description, age and address
 - The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody or welfare of the child
 - Any other information to help authorities assist the child (who, what, when, where)

▶ **Criminal Penalties for Failure to Report**

Upon being found guilty, the individual shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$5,000, or by imprisonment in jail not to exceed one year, or both. Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated Section 43-21-353(7).