

## Child Abuse Reporting Mandate

Effective July 1, 2012, the Virginia General Assembly approved a revision of statutory law 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia to include requiring specific individuals/agencies to report certain injuries to the appropriate agency. Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, in coordination with the Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Department of Social Services, are providing information to volunteers and league administrators to help understand the law and how to identify and report abuse to the appropriate parties. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department will host an annual training in May to help our co-sponsored organizations who are transitioning into leadership.

The new provision affecting parks and recreation leaders and volunteers is listed below.

§63.2-1509. Requirement that certain injuries to children be reported by physicians, nurses, teachers, etc.; penalty for failure to report.

- A. The following persons who, in their professional or official capacity, have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline:
16. Any athletic coach, director or other person 18 years of age or older employed by or volunteering with a private sports organization or team;
  17. Administrators or employees 18 years of age or older of public or private day camps, youth centers and youth recreation programs;

In Virginia, a child is abused or neglected every 75 minutes, and every 14 days a child dies from such mistreatment. The immediate impact of abuse or neglect on a child is tragic, but so, too, are the long-term consequences -- affecting children, their communities, and the Commonwealth as a whole. Child abuse is often hidden, may occur over time, and is usually preventable.

The Chesterfield/Colonial Heights Department of Social Services has compiled a list of indicators of different types of abuse and neglect including physical abuse and neglect, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

- Physical indicators of Abuse
  - Bruises and welts
  - Burns
  - Fractures
  - Lacerations or abrasions
- Child Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse
  - The child reports that the injury was caused by the parent
  - Frightened of parents
  - Wears clothing inappropriate to weather to cover body
  - Behavioral extremes: aggressive or withdrawn
- Physical Indicators of Neglect
  - Consistent hunger, poor hygiene inappropriate dress
  - Lack of supervision due to parent's absence or incapacity
  - Abandonment
- Child Behavioral Indicators of Neglect
  - Begging, stealing food
  - Constant fatigue, falling asleep in class
  - Child states there is no caretaker
  - Frequently absent or tardy
  - Child engages in risky behaviors
- Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse
  - Difficulty walking or sitting
  - Pain or itching in genital area
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## Child Abuse Reporting Mandate continued

- Venereal disease, especially in pre-teens
- Pregnancy
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas
- Child Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse
  - Child reports sexual contact with a caretaker
  - Withdrawal, chronic depression, infantile behavior
  - Bizarre or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge
  - Detailed and age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior
  - Unusually seductive behaviors with peers and adults
- Physical Indicators of Emotional Abuse
  - Speech disorders
  - Lags in physical development
  - Non-organic failure to thrive
  - Learning problems
- Child Behavioral Indicators of Emotional Abuse
  - Habit disorder (biting, rocking, etc)
  - Conduct disorders
  - Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, etc)
  - Behavior extremes
  - Self-destructive or suicidal behavior
  - Cruel behavior

The Department of Social Services has provided the following resources to the public regarding Child Abuse and Neglect:

- The Virginia Department of Social Services – **A Guide to Mandated Reporters (pdf)**
  - <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index2.cgi>
- The Virginia Code
  - <http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm>
- Child Welfare Gateway
  - <http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/>

How to report

- Call local department of social services during business hours: 8 AM to 5 PM (Chesterfield & Colonial Heights: 748-1100)
- Or call Statewide Hotline 1-800-552-7096
  - 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week

You may report anonymously if you choose, but you are encouraged to give your name. This makes it possible for CPS to contact you if more information is needed and to inform you of the outcome.

And the following was presented with local resources numbers and emergency contact information:

- 911 - Police, Fire, Rescue, Emergency
- 748-1251 - Chesterfield County Police Dispatch Non-Emergency
- 1-800-838-8238 - Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline
- 748-6356 - Chesterfield Mental Health Crisis Hotline
- 1-800-552-7096 - State Child Abuse 24 Hour Hotline
- 748-1100 - Chesterfield-Colonial Heights Department of Social Services