

DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS...

Are the Children Safe at Home?

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Child abuse and neglect is, unfortunately, an everyday issue. But now, at a time when parents are worried, stressed and stuck at home...we're seeing a significant drop in child welfare referrals. Undoubtedly, the rates of abuse and neglect are rising, but the referral sources- schools, youth programs, houses of worship- are closed.

We need YOU- to check on the children.

Reporting child abuse and neglect is a community responsibility.

If something does not look safe, sound safe or feel safe...report it. When you report you are asking for a professional to help a child and their family. You do not need proof. You are not making an accusation. Anonymous reports are accepted from anyone. Your identity will be kept confidential, and you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action if your report is in good faith. If you reasonably suspect a child is unsafe-report it. You may be the only person to act.

Questions to ask the children:

- How is everyone getting along today?
- Are you worried about anything?
- What are you doing for fun?

Questions to ask the parents:

- Is everyone okay?
- Can you get everything you need?
- Do you need any help right now?

LEARN THE SIGNS A CHILD IS NOT SAFE

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Child seems frightened of the caregiver
- Child has burns, bites, broken bones, bruising, black eyes, or complains of pain.
- Caregiver offers no explanation of the child's injury or blames the child's behavior.

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Child attaches quickly to strangers or new adults.
- Child shows unusual knowledge or behavior for their age.
- Child has difficulty walking or sitting.
- An adult inappropriately touches a child, watches pornography with a child, or says sexual things to a child.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Child shows extremes in behavior, or is overly aggressive or compliant
- Child seems emotionally unattached to caregiver and others.
- Caregiver blames, belittles, or berates the child and refuses to help the child.

NEGLECT

- Child begs or steals food, has very poor hygiene, or says no one at home provides care.
- Child uses alcohol or other drugs
- Highly stressful family situations, or adults in the home abusing alcohol or drugs.
- Unlocked weapons or guns in the home

If you suspect immediate danger, call 911

If you suspect it, report it.

This is a time for family, friends, and neighbors to help each other. If you have any concerns for a child or a family, call PA ChildLine or your local county Children and Youth Agency to make a report.

PA ChildLine: (800)932-0313
Mercer County Children and Youth Services: (724)662-2703