

Reporting Child Abuse in Idaho

Published 11/18/2026

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE

Youth Safety & Permanency

Keeping children safe is our primary goal.

Strengthen families to prevent abuse and neglect.

Works as a team with law enforcement and the courts to protect the health and safety of each child.

Whenever possible, children should remain with their families.

Mandatory Reporting

Idaho law requires you to call whenever you have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected, or abandoned. Idaho Code, Section 16-1605

Everyone is required to call.

You must call within 24 hours.



Who Do You Call?

- Statewide: 1-855-552-KIDS (5437)
- Treasure Valley: 208-334-KIDS (5437)
- Local law enforcement
- Idaho 211 Careline



What Information Do You Provide?



- Current location of child
- Description of injury, safety issues
- Name of child, date of birth
- Date of incident
- Family members
- Family phone number/contact information
- Address for the child and family

What if You Don’t Call or Are Wrong?

- A child may be seriously hurt.
- It is a misdemeanor if you fail to report child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
- Reports of child abuse or neglect made in good faith and without malice are immune to civil or criminal liability. (Idaho Code, Section 16-1606).
- It is a crime to intentionally make a false report. (Idaho Code, Section 18-5415)



What Happens After You Call?



Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse means harming a child in a way that leaves physical marks or injuries.

- Call when you see a child with…
  - Injuries such as bruises, welts, cuts, bite marks, or broken bones with no appropriate explanation.
  - Burns or bruises that look like the object used to inflict them.
  - A pattern of repeated injuries.
  - A disclosure he or she was hurt by an adult.



Neglect

Neglect is when children are not getting the care and protection they need.

- Call when a child…
  - Is unable to care for themselves and is left alone.
  - Lives in a house where health or safety hazards are present.
  - Has no home or emergency shelter.
  - Has nothing to eat and the child appears hungry and underweight.



Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse is the use of a child in a sexual way. It may be sexual touching, molestation, incest, rape, or taking pictures of a child for obscene or pornographic purposes.

- Call when a child…
  - Has told you they have been touched inappropriately.
  - Talks about having to play “games” they don’t like.
  - Tells you they have to keep something a secret.
  - States that someone will be hurt if they tell the secret.
  - Persistently engaged in developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviors.



Youth Safety & Permanency Statistics, SFY 2025

- 24,652 child protection referrals statewide.
- 10,221 assigned for assessment.
- 2,295 assigned for physical abuse.
- 889 assigned for sexual abuse.
- 7,007 assigned for neglect.
- A total of 2,186 children were served through the foster care program
- In the same year, 950 children left foster care.
- 65% of children who left foster care were reunified with their parents/caregivers.



- Source: Facts, Figures, and Trends https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/about-dhw/facts-figures-and-trends

Resources & Websites

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

Idaho Child Abuse Reporting Law

Section 16-1605 - Idaho State Legislature

Governor's Task Force on Children at Risk

http://www.idcartf.org/

Idaho Children's Trust Fund

https://idahochildrenstrustfund.org/



Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence

http://www.idvsa.org/

Empowered Supporters

- Not every concern means a child is unsafe.
- Use the **211 Idaho CareLine**
  - Call 211 or 800-926-2588
  - Text 898211

- When you suspect a child is being abused or neglected **you must report**.
- When you see a family struggling, **you can support**.

