



Human Services Department

Main Office • 926 S. 8th Street, P.O. Box 1177 • Manitowoc WI 54221-1177
Phone: 920.683.4230 • Fax: 920.683.4908 • TTY: 920.683.5168

Economic Support • 4319 Expo Drive, P.O. Box 874, Manitowoc, WI 54221-0874
Phone: 920.683.4300 • Fax: 920.683.6998 Call Center 1-888-256-4563

Business Operations • Economic Support • Clinical Services
Child Protective Services • Child & Family Services • Family Resources • Youth & Family Services

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Child abuse is the physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment of a child (ages 0 to 17) by a parent, family member, other caregiver, or non-caregiver. Physical abuse will involve cuts, broken or fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, or “severe and frequent bruising” inflicted on a child by other than accidental means. Sexual abuse will involve sexual intercourse, other sexual contact, or exploitation. Emotional damage means harm to a child’s psychological or intellectual functioning, exhibited to a severe degree. **Child neglect** is the failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide necessary care (including supervision), food, clothing, shelter, and medical care – for reasons other than poverty – so as to seriously endanger the physical health of a child.

WHAT IF I’M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD REPORT?

Please report! A report requires only reasonable suspicion, NOT absolute certainty. Human Services staff will make follow-up decisions. We at Human Services cannot protect children unless they are brought to our attention.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I REPORT CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS?

A SOCIAL WORKER WILL WRITE UP YOUR REPORT. They will ask for information such as dates of birth, addresses and phone numbers regarding the child, parent/caregiver, household members and suspected maltreater. They will also ask questions about the suspected abuse or neglect. Please be prepared to provide information. The more information that you share, the better subsequent agency decision-making will be.

A supervisor will review the report for acceptancy and urgency decision. The supervisor will make a response time decision if a case is opened or “screened in.” Response time is determined by several factors and level of imminent danger. Screened in cases are designated a response time varying from immediate/same day up to 5 business days.

If you make a report and it is not opened for investigation or “screened out,” it doesn’t mean that your concerns are not valid. Screened out cases may have two outcomes: the case may be closed with no further action taken by our agency; or the case could be referred to Community Response, a voluntary program through the agency. A Community Response worker would provide support and offer assistance with resources in regards to housing, food, child care resources, parenting assistance for children of all ages, activities to do with children, help with finances and many more!