

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General request for information

- **What is the address or phone number to my Child Welfare office?**

You can find it at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.

- **How much do I owe in child support?**

To find out, contact the Oregon Department of Justice Child Support Program any of the ways below:

Call: 503-373-7300 or 800-850-0228

TTY: 800-735-2900

Email: ChildSupportCustomerService@doj.state.or.us

Web portal: <https://customerportal.oregonchildsupport.gov/login>

Branch office: <https://www.doj.state.or.us/child-support/locations/>

- **What is the status of my food stamp interview?**

To find out, contact your local Self-Sufficiency Program. To find a local office go to <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Offices/Pages/Self-Sufficiency.aspx>.

Request from other states

- **I am a caseworker in another state. Can you tell me about the family history?**

Please email your request to RecReq.ORChildHot@dhsosha.state.or.us. A hotline worker will respond promptly to you.

- **I am a caseworker from another state child protective services agency. Can you give me the name and number of the Oregon caseworker?**

Our receptionist will confirm your identity. The receptionist will then provide any contact information that may be helpful.

Questions that involve legal advice

- **The other parent will not let me see my child. What can I do?**

Child Welfare does not intervene in custody cases or violations of custody agreements unless there is a concern for child safety. You can contact an attorney to determine the best course of action. You may also reach out to your local legal aid organization for them to possibly help you. The Oregon State Bar has a lawyer referral service you can access online. When you use this service, you can receive a 30-minute consultation for a maximum fee of \$35. Their information is as follows:

- Hours: 8 am to 5 pm Monday-Friday
- Phone: 503-684-3763 or toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-7636.
- Online referral request form: <https://www.osbar.org/public/ris/>

- **My ex isn't following our court order agreement. I can't afford a lawyer. Can Child Welfare help?**

See the answer above.

- **I am a family member (or friend) who has raised these children for years. Now, (dad or mom, or both) are back and want the children. What can I do?**

This is a difficult situation for all involved. However, Child Welfare cannot give legal advice. (See the answer above.) If you have concerns about the children's safety in the care of their parents, you can talk to a screener to take a report.

- **I am one parent. The other parent wants to visit the children. I don't know the outcome of the case from several months ago. Do I have to let the other parent see the children?**

Please contact the Child Protective Services caseworker or their supervisor at the local Department of Human Services office to request this information. If you know the county in which the case was opened you can contact that office. A list of the offices is at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>

- **My neighbors keep fighting, and the children are home. Do I call you or the police the next time this happens?**

If you believe there is a need for an urgent or immediate response, please contact 911. Otherwise, contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233).

Questions related to child abuse

- **What is child abuse?**

Child abuse is defined by [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.010](#).

(A) Any assault, as defined in ORS chapter 163, of a child and any **physical injury to a child** which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation given of the injury.

(B) Any **mental injury** to a child, which shall include only observable and substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological ability to function caused by cruelty to the child, with due regard to the culture of the child.

(C) **Rape** of a child, which includes but is not limited to rape, sodomy, unlawful sexual penetration and incest, as those acts are described in ORS chapter 163.

(D) **Sexual abuse**, as described in ORS chapter 163.

(E) **Sexual exploitation**, including but not limited to:

- (i) **Contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor**, as defined in ORS chapter 163, and any other conduct which allows, employs, authorizes, permits, induces or encourages a child to engage in the performing for people to observe or the photographing, filming, tape recording or other exhibition which, in whole or in part, depicts sexual conduct or contact, as defined in ORS 167.002 or described in ORS 163.665 and 163.670, sexual abuse involving a child or rape of a child, but not including any conduct which is part of any investigation conducted pursuant to ORS 419B.020 or which is designed to serve educational or other legitimate purposes; and
- (ii) Allowing, permitting, encouraging or hiring a child to engage in prostitution as described in ORS 167.007 or a **commercial sex act** as defined in ORS 163.266, to purchase sex with a minor as described in ORS 163.413 or to engage in commercial sexual solicitation as described in ORS 167.008.

(F) **Negligent treatment** or maltreatment of a child, including but not limited to the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care that is likely to endanger the health or welfare of the child.

(G) **Threatened harm** to a child, which means subjecting a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare.

(H) **Buying or selling a person under 18 years of age** as described in ORS 163.537.

(I) **Permitting a person under 18 years of age to enter or remain in or upon premises where methamphetamines are being manufactured.**

(J) **Unlawful exposure to a controlled substance**, as defined in ORS 475.005, or to the unlawful manufacturing of a cannabinoid extract, as defined in ORS 475B.015, that subjects a child to a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or safety.

(b) "Abuse" does not include reasonable discipline unless the discipline results in one of the conditions described in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

If you suspect a child may be exposed to any of the above, please make a report to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

- **Can a child be left home alone at the age of ten?**

Age alone does not determine a child's ability to be safe while alone. However, Oregon law indicates a child under age 10 may not be left alone for a period that could endanger their welfare.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway has a valuable fact sheet for families called "Leaving Your Child Home Alone." It walks adults through considerations such as:

- Age and maturity
- When and how long the child is left alone (circumstances)
- The child's understanding of safety skills (how to handle an emergency)
- Whether the child is ready to care for younger children, and
- Tips for parents as to how to prepare their child.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/homealone.pdf>

- **Is it abuse when a parent or caregiver uses drugs but not in front of their children?**

Screeners try to understand how parent or caregiver drug or alcohol use affects their ability to care for their child safely. There may be a concern for abuse if there are concerns that drug use influences parent or caregiver:

- Ability to provide for the child's physical, emotional, sexual, mental health, or
- Standards for food, clothing and shelter of the child.

If you want to report abuse or neglect you can speak to a screener.

- **Is living out a car considered abuse?**

Residential instability is a problem which many families in Oregon face. It is not considered abuse unless the parent is unable or unwilling to provide for their child's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter and protection.

- **I am younger than 18 years old. I don't feel safe at home. What can I do?**

If you feel unsafe a hotline screener will need to talk with you about why that is. Once the screener has more information the screener can:

- Give you resources, or
- Determine if there is a report of abuse.

- **How do I check if someone is a pedophile?**

There are web sites such as the National Sex Offender Public Website located at <https://www.nsopw.gov/> that may be able to help you in your search. At the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline, we are unable to provide personal or confidential information about a person or family.

Mandatory reporter questions

- **What is a mandatory reporter?**

Under Oregon law, a mandatory reporter is any public or private official. **You may be one.** For a list of who is one, please refer to [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.005\(6\)](#).

[State of Oregon: Abuse - Mandatory Reporting](#)

[State of Oregon: Abuse - Mandatory Reporting for DHS Employees](#)

- **When do I have to report?**

If you are a mandatory reporter you must report when you have reasonable cause to believe:

- Any child you come in contact with has suffered abuse, or
- Any person you come in contact with has abused a child.

You shall immediately report or cause a report to be made in the way [Oregon Revised Statute 419B.015](#).

Anyone can, and should, report suspicions of child abuse. The safety of Oregon's children is a priority for all our communities.

- **What details do I have to report?**

Be prepared to provide the following information when it is known to you. This information is helpful. However, it is not required to make a report:

- Name, date of birth or age, for all adults and children involved
- A description of the abuse, including whether the child has current injuries
- Alleged perpetrators name, location and access to the child
- Whether the child has American Indian or Alaska Native heritage
- Phone numbers, including area code
- Any cultural or language considerations, race and ethnicity
- Addresses, directions, or other ways to locate the persons of concern
- Additional information related to family functioning, resources and supports
- Detailed observations and statements made by the child or others
- A description of the child's disability, including any special needs

- **I am a parent who has a question about teachers. Do they have to make a report if they think they may see signs of abuse?**

Teachers are mandatory reporters. All teachers are required under ORS 419B.010 to report suspicions of child abuse. See the above definition.

Request for case information

- **I am a mandatory reporter. Can you tell me the outcome of the report I made?**

It depends. The screener determines:

- If a report should be documented, and
- If it meets criteria to be assigned or closed at screening (CAS).

The screener must let you know the screening decision if you gave your contact information.

When you call for a report status the receptionist who takes your call will:

- Request your screening report ID number
- Provide you with the decision (assigned or closed at screening)
- Ask you if the you want to speak to the screener who took your report about the decision. If you do, the receptionist will gather your name and phone number or email address, or both. The receptionist will then send an email requesting a reply to the screener and their supervisor.

- **What is my Child Welfare caseworker number?**

Please contact your local Child Welfare office for your caseworker number. You can find contact information at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.

- **I am the reporter; can you tell me when Child Welfare will check on the child?**

When a screener determines a report will be assigned, the screener must let you know (if you leave contact information), that a child protective services worker will make efforts to inform you at a later date about:

- If contact with the alleged victim was made
- If the abuse occurred, and
- If services will be provided.

When a screener determines they will close a report at screening, the screener must let you know:

- Contact with the alleged victim will not be made
- An abuse determination will not be made, and
- Whether services will be provided.

If you have not received this information about a report you made, please contact the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline at 1-855-503-SAFE (7233) and press 3 to reach the receptionist.

- **I am the other parent. Can you tell me if a case is open?**
Please contact your local Child Welfare office. You can find contact information at <https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/offices/pages/child-welfare.aspx>.
- **How do I request my own records from Child Welfare?**
Please contact the Department of Human Services Public Records Unit at <https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Pages/RecordRequests.aspx>.

Request for Child Welfare to respond

- **I need a welfare check on my child who is with the other parent. How do I get or request a welfare check?**
To request a law enforcement welfare check, please call your local non-emergency line. If you suspect your child is being abused, call the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline to make a report.
- **My child isn't going to school on the other parent's time. I need Child Welfare to enforce the child going to school. How do I do this?**
Child Welfare does not intervene in education attendance unless there is a safety concern. It may be helpful to talk with your child's school administrator about the challenges. They may help you to determine if a referral for truancy is appropriate or necessary.
- **I need to put my child in a voluntary placement. How do I do this?**
Requests for placement of a child should be made to the hotline. During the call the worker will collect information about your child's:
 - Emotional, behavioral or mental disorder, or
 - Developmental or physical disability.

A request for placement, in the absence of any safety concerns, will not result in an emergent response by Child Welfare. Not all requests result in an assignment or placement. If assigned, a caseworker has up to 10 days to contact you to discuss a plan for your child.

If you or a child in your care is at risk of harming themselves or others, please contact:

- Law enforcement in an emergency, or
- Your local mental health crisis number.

- **I need someone to come and pick up my child *now!* When is Child Welfare coming out?**

Child Welfare is required to respond to allegations of child abuse that meet certain criteria. When you need an emergent response please get in touch with your local law enforcement.

Law enforcement:

- **I am a probation officer. Can you tell me if there is an open Child Welfare case?**

Yes. The receptionist will ask for your identifying information and number. If there is an open case, we will share your information with the current worker and their supervisor. Upon request, we will provide you the local office point of contact and phone number. If you believe there may be a concern for child safety, please contact the hotline and speak with a screener.