



**Female Narrator:**

“Welcome to the Concerned Citizen’s Guide to Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment.”



**Female Narrator:**

“This guide is Sponsored by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.”

**Male Narrator:**

“This comprehensive Citizen’s Guide will take approximately 10 minutes to complete (without optional videos), but we encourage you to save this link to your Favorites in your web browser for future reference and viewing. If you need help doing this, please click on the question mark in the lower portion of the next screen.”

New York State  
Office of  
Children & Family  
Services

# Introduction

## How to Use This Guide

# 1

Make sure your audio is not muted. You should be hearing sound now. If you are not, please click the question mark in the bottom of the screen.

Introduction    A Child in Need    Make a Call    What Happens Next

**Hotline: 1-800-342-3720**

Speaker icon, Question mark icon, Previous slide icon, Play/Pause icon, Next slide icon

**Male Narrator:**

“A couple of quick tips on how to use this guide. If you need help at any point, click on the question mark at the bottom of your screen. Make sure your audio is on – if you can hear my voice now then you are all set with the audio setup.

There are some interactive components in this guide. You will be instructed on how to use them. There are optional videos for those viewers connecting via DSL. If you have a dial up connection, we do not suggest playing these videos as they take a lot of bandwidth.

You can navigate through the slides by clicking on the arrows in the lower right hand corner. At the end of every slide, the arrow in the lower right hand corner will turn bright green to indicate when to move to the next screen.

Click the green arrow in the lower right hand corner to continue to the guide now.”

The slide features a dark blue background with a green horizontal bar at the top. In the top left corner is the logo for the New York State Office of Children & Family Services. The word "Introduction" is written in white on the green bar. Below this, the text "24 Hours a Day" is displayed in a large, white, serif font with a red drop shadow. In the center is a white clock face with red hands. Below the clock, the text "7 Days a Week" is displayed in the same large, white, serif font with a red drop shadow. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with four colored segments: green for "Introduction", orange for "A Child in Need", purple for "Make a Call", and light blue for "What Happens Next". Below the navigation bar is a red bar with the number "2-3720" in white. To the right of the red bar are several control icons: a speaker, a question mark, a back arrow, a pause symbol, a play arrow, and a forward arrow.

**Female Narrator:**

“The New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (Child Abuse Hotline) receives calls regarding suspected child abuse and maltreatment 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

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# Introduction

## Mandated Reporters

## Concerned Citizens

Do you think you are a mandated reporter?  
Click here to find out more.

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**720**

**Female Narrator:**

“Calls come from two types of callers: persons who are mandated (required by law) to report cases of suspected child abuse and maltreatment and calls from non-mandated reporters such as yourself. Mandated reporters include professionals like teachers, doctors and social workers. Non-mandated reporters include friends, relatives, and neighbors.”

**Male Narrator:**

“Click in the center of the screen if you think you might be a mandated reporter or click the green arrow at the bottom of the screen to continue.”

The image shows a video player interface. At the top left is the logo for the New York State Office of Children & Family Services. The main title is "Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?". The central area is dark blue with three large orange question marks. Below this is a navigation bar with four colored segments: "Introduction" (green), "A Child in Need" (orange), "Make a Call" (purple), and "What Happens Next" (blue). At the bottom left, a red banner displays the "Hotline: 1-800-342-3720". On the bottom right, there are standard video control icons: a speaker, a question mark, a back arrow, a pause button, a play button, and a forward arrow.

**Female Narrator:**

“Maybe you’ve seen something that makes you uncomfortable – a mom punching or kicking her child, a neighbor not providing supervision for his child, or you have some other serious concern about the care of a child. What should you do?”

A call to the Child Abuse Hotline can be the first step in providing safety or other needed assistance for a child.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

### What do you think?

*Do you need to be sure a child  
has been abused or maltreated  
before calling the child abuse  
hotline?*

Yes No

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**NYS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-**

**Male Narrator:**

“Answer this question by clicking the yes or no button”.

“You do not need to be sure a child has been abused or maltreated when you call the Child Abuse Hotline – you just need a reasonable concern for the child’s safety or well-being.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

Reasonable Cause to Suspect: a logical basis for your concern. It does not mean you have to be certain or have proof.

# Reasonable Cause to Suspect

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**42-3720**

**Female Narrator:**

“The Child Abuse Hotline does not require you to have proof of child abuse or maltreatment. While the Child Abuse Hotline answers all calls, a report will only be registered if you provide a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment. The New York Statewide Child Abuse Hotline will register a report regarding a child in need of care and protection in New York. “

**Male Narrator:**

“Click the play button to the right to see a video further explaining Reasonable Cause to Suspect.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

Drag the terms from the left to the correct definition on the right.

**abused child**

a child whose parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care inflicts upon the child serious physical injury, creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or commits a sex offense against the child.

**maltreated child**

a child harmed or at risk of harm by a parent or other person legally responsible who fails to exercise a minimum degree of care.

Check Answer    Reset

1 / 0

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**42-3720**

### Male Narrator:

“What do you think constitutes maltreatment and abuse? Drag the term from the left to the correct definition on the right. Click the check answer button when you are done.”

“A maltreated child is a child under the age of 18 harmed or at risk of harm by a parent or other person legally responsible who fails to exercise a minimum degree of care.”

“An abused child is a child under the age of 18 whose parent or other person legally responsible for his/her care inflicts upon the child serious physical injury, creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or commits a sex offense against the child.”

“For a complete definition of the terms, refer to the glossary at the end of this guide.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

Teachers

Parents

Any adults living in the home

### Who is a "Person Legally Responsible"?

Guardians

Day Care Providers

Staff of Residential Facilities

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**1-800-342-3720**

Navigation icons: Home, Help, Previous, Play/Pause, Next

### Female Narrator:

"The Child Abuse Hotline can register a report if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a "Person Legally Responsible" ( or PLR) has abused or maltreated a child.

A person legally responsible a person who provides care and supervision of a child. An individual's status as a Person Legally Responsible is determined by their relationship to the child. If a report is registered, the Person Legally Responsible is the "subject" of the report."

### Male Narrator:

"Click on the pictures to see if the person represented is considered legally responsible"

"Teachers are not considered Persons Legally Responsible"

"Parents are considered Persons Legally Responsible"

"Day Care providers are considered Persons Legally Responsible"

"Staff of Residential Facilities are considered Persons Legally Responsible"

"Guardians are considered Persons Legally Responsible"

"Any adults living in the home are considered Persons Legally Responsible"

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

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***To report a concern,***

Navigation icons: Home, Help, Previous, Play/Pause, Next

**Female Narrator:**

“The list that follows contains some common signs of abuse or maltreatment. Please understand some abused or maltreated children will not have any of these signs.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

Click on the cube below.

Possible  
Indicators (Red  
Flags) of  
Maltreatment

Introduction    A Child in Need    Make a Call    What Happens Next

se Hotline: 1-800-342-3720

**Male Narrator:**

“Click on the cube to see some red flags for maltreatment.”

**Female Narrator:**

“Possible Indicators (Red Flags) for maltreatment can include: Consistent hunger- a child steals or begs for food Lack of personal care – poor personal hygiene, torn, dirty and/or inappropriate clothes; Untreated need for glasses, dental care or other medical attention; A child inappropriately left unattended or without supervision.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

Click on the cube below.

Possible  
Indicators  
(Red Flags)  
of Physical  
Abuse

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**00-342-3720**

**Male Narrator:**

“Click on the cube to see some red flags for physical abuse.”

**Female Narrator:**

“Possible Indicators (Red Flags) for physical abuse can include:

Frequent and/or unexplained injuries, especially ones that appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns or impressions of other instruments.

Fear of going home or fear of person or persons caring for them.

Injuries to both sides of the body or to multiple areas of the body. (accidents tend to damage only one side of the body)

Destructive behavior such as aggression towards peers or siblings, destruction of property or vandalism.”

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## Do You Have a Concern About a Child You Know?

Click on the cube below.

Possible  
Indicators  
(Red Flags)  
of Sexual  
Abuse

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**Abuse Hotline: 1-800-342-3722**

**Male Narrator:**

“Click on the cube to see some red flags for sexual abuse.”

**Female Narrator:**

“Possible Indicators (Red Flags) for sexual abuse can include:

Difficulty and/or pain when sitting or walking;

Sexually suggestive, inappropriate or promiscuous behavior or verbalization;

Expressing age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual relations; and

Sexual victimization of other children.”

The image is a screenshot of a video player. At the top left, there is a logo for the New York State Office of Children & Family Services. The main title of the video is "Make a Call to Help a Child...". The central text, displayed against a blue sky with white clouds, reads "1-800-342-3720" in large red letters with a white outline, followed by "call anytime, day or night any day of the week" in white text. Below the main content, there is a navigation bar with four colored segments: "Introduction" (green), "A Child in Need" (orange), "Make a Call" (purple), and "What Happens Next" (blue). At the bottom left of the player is a red bar with a white "0" indicating the current time. At the bottom right are standard video control icons: a speaker, a question mark, a double left arrow, a double right arrow, a play button, and a double right arrow.

**Female Narrator:**

“Reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment should be made immediately -- at any time of the day or night and on any day of the week -- by telephone to the Child Abuse Hotline.

The Child Abuse Hotline is open 24 hours a day; seven days a week. The Child Abuse Hotline toll-free telephone number is:

1-800-342-3720”

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## Make a Call to Help a Child....

Click to the right to play a short video clip of part of a conversation between a caller and a trained child protective specialist.

Introduction A Child in Need **Make a Call** What Happens Next

**Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-342-3720**

**Female Narrator:**

“The person who answers the phone at the Child Abuse Hotline is a trained child protective services specialist.

You will be asked a few questions about your concerns and other information to identify the child.

You will also be asked for information to identify the person legally responsible (or PLR).”

**Male Narrator:**

“Click on the play button to the right to see a short video clip of a conversation between a caller and a child protective services specialist.”

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## Make a Call to Help a Child....

Do you need a translation line?  
Do you have other concerns?  
Who is the parent or guardian?  
Is the child injured?  
What prompted you to call?  
Are there other children in the house?  
Do you know the full name and address of the child?  
Where is the child now?

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**To 1**

**Female Narrator:**

“Here are some questions you may be asked when you call. “

**Voices:**

“Do you speak english, or do you need to be connected to a language translation line?”

What concern prompted your call today?

Is the child injured or at risk of being injured? (Please keep in mind that injury can be physical, emotional, mental or sexual)

Do you know the child's full name, age and/or home address? (The Child Abuse Hotline will need a way to locate the child. If you do not know where the child lives, do you know other locating information such as his/her school, child daycare center, a phone number or other identifying information such as a vehicle license plate number?)

Do you know the name of the parent or other person legally responsible (another clickable on PLR definition) who caused the injury, or created the risk of harm to the child?

Do you know if there are any brothers, sisters or other children in the household?

Where is the child now?

Do you have any other concerns about the child?”



**Female Narrator:**

“When you make a call to the Child Abuse Hotline, the child protective services specialist may take different actions depending on the information you provide. The information you provide to the child protective services specialist will be registered as a report if it fits the basic legal requirements. Even if a report is not registered, other actions may be taken. The child protective services specialist may make a referral to law enforcement.

If a report is registered, the local investigative agency will begin an investigation within 24 hours. While you can make an anonymous report, if you provide your name and phone number, the child protective caseworker may contact you for further information about your concerns or other information that may assist in a thorough investigation. At the conclusion of an investigation the child protective service determines if the report is “indicated” or “unfounded”.

If a report is indicated, it means that after investigation, there was some credible evidence to support the allegations in the report.

If a report is unfounded, it means that after Investigation, there was no credible evidence to support the allegations in the report.

The child protective services specialist will inform you if your report is not registered. Make sure you understand why. You always have the option to speak with a Child Abuse Hotline supervisor if you don’t understand the decision made by the child protective services specialist. Or sometimes information about other appropriate services may be suggested as a resource for the child and/or family. If something else happens or if you have additional concerns, you should call the Child Abuse Hotline again.”

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## What Happens Next

Click play to learn about Philomena.

Introduction A Child in Need Make a Call What Happens Next

**-800-342-3720**

**Female Narrator:**

“The child protective system is designed to help children and direct families on how to get help and services, as you will see in this video. “

**Male Narrator:**

“Click the play button to the right to learn about Philomena. Here is a remarkable story showing how the involvement of child protective services and the courts can be the catalyst for a person to change their life, and their children’s lives, for the better.”

“Philomena currently works for her local community Office of Mental Health. She is also participating in an OCFS initiative, Family-to-Family Support; Philomena continues to provide essential assessment and referral services to DSS clients. “

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## What Happens Next

Click on the words to the right to hear answers to common questions.

Family Court? Confidential? Protective Custody?

Introduction A Child in Need Make a Call What Happens Next

**The NYS Child Abuse Hotline**

### Female Narrator:

#### “PROTECTIVE CUSTODY

The child protective caseworker focuses on the safety of the child. A child may only be removed from his or her home when it is necessary for their safety.

#### FAMILY COURT

Family Court actions are not necessarily a part of a child protective investigation. In some cases, a child protective caseworker may petition the Family Court to mandate services when they are necessary for the care and protection of a child.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Child abuse reports are confidential. Your identity as the reporter is protected from the family. Additionally, the investigation and its conclusion are protected from the public.”

### Male Narrator:

“Click on the text links to the right to hear answers to some common questions.”

The screenshot shows a video player interface. At the top left is the logo for the New York State Office of Children & Family Services. The title 'What Happens Next' is displayed in large white text on a dark blue background. Below the title, on the left, is the text: *...the first step in getting the family the help it needs and ending the cycle of abuse...*. On the right is a video frame showing a man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a dark turtleneck, looking slightly to the right. Below the video frame is a standard video player control bar with play, stop, previous, next, and volume buttons. At the bottom of the player is a navigation bar with four colored segments: green for 'Introduction', orange for 'A Child in Need', purple for 'Make a Call', and blue for 'What Happens Next'. Below the navigation bar is a red bar with the phone number '42-3720' in white text, and a row of icons including a speaker, a question mark, and navigation arrows.

**Female Narrator:**

“Every child is important and should be safe. When you make a call to the child abuse hotline to report suspected abuse and maltreatment, your actions may prevent further injuries to a child. Intervention by child protective services following your report is often the first step in getting the family the help it needs and ending the cycle of abuse.”

**Male Narrator:**

“Click the play button on the right to view a video clip on the importance of making a call to the child abuse hotline.”

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# Resources

*Some helpful links...*

- Glossary of Terms
- Resources for Concerned Citizens
- County Departments of Social Services
- Print-formatted version of this guide.

Return to OCFS Child Abuse  
Prevention web site

Introduction   A Child in Need   Make a Call   What Happens Next

**Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-342-XXXX**

**Female Narrator:**

“Thank you for taking the time to learn about identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and maltreatment in New York State. This concludes the presentation; click on the links on the screen if you would like more information.”