DECS
Mandatory Reporting
Mandatory Reporting Legislation

Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
Reporting obligations

A person is guilty of an offence if the person:

(a) believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child:
   (i) has been or is likely to be a victim of a sexual offence; or
   (ii) otherwise has suffered or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation; and

(b) does not, as soon as possible after forming that belief, report (orally or in writing) to the CEO or a police officer:
   (i) that belief; and
   (ii) any knowledge of the person forming the grounds for that belief; and
   (iii) any factual circumstances on which that knowledge is based.
Harm to a child is any significant detrimental effect caused by any act, omission or circumstance on:

- the physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing of the child; or
- the physical, psychological or emotional development of the child; or
- the emotional abuse or neglect, or sexual abuse or other exploitation of a child; or
- the exposure of a child to physical violence.

Exploitation of a child includes any sexual abuse of a child, any other forms of exploitation, or involving the child as a participant or spectator in any act of a sexual nature, prostitution or pornographic performance.

Sexual Offences are defined in Section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Evidence and Procedure) Act and include any sexual activity involving children under the age of 16.

Care and Protection of Children Act 2007
Section 15 and 16
You must make a report if you believe on reasonable grounds that a child has, or is likely to be, harmed or exploited, when:

- a child tells you that s/he has been harmed
- someone else tells you that the child has been harmed
- observations of the child’s behaviour or development indicate that the child is being harmed
- external indicators of harm are recognised

You do not have to prove the harm or exploitation.
You need only report what you believe may be the case, and the grounds for that belief.
To report your belief of harm or exploitation, contact

Office of Children & Families (OCF)
Child Protection Hotline on

1800 700 250
(Freecall 24hrs)
Reporting Suspicions of Harm

Office of Children & Families (OCF) will ask the following information:

- Child's name, age, address and present location
- The nature of suspected abuse or neglect
- The basis for your belief e.g. what you have seen or heard
- Information about any immediate danger to the child
- Any other useful information – See Child Protection Reporting Checklist

If you don’t have all this information you should still report
What Happens Next?

- If there is not enough information the hotline worker will tell you and can also answer any questions you may have.
- OCF investigate suspected harm of children by people within the immediate family and assess the overall family situation.
- Police investigate suspected harm of children by people outside of the immediate family.
- At times joint OCF and Police investigations occur.

The first preference for Office of Children & Families is to SUPPORT the parents to enable the child to remain safely with their family.
If a child discloses that they are being harmed:

- Listen to the child
- Do not form any immediate judgement as to the truth or otherwise of the disclosure
- Use a calm and reassuring voice
- Manage your own reaction,
- Try not to show doubt, judgment or shock
- Don’t make promises you cannot keep
- Comfort and reassure
- Do **NOT** investigate
Convey to the child:

• It is not the child's fault
• The child was right to tell
• The child is not alone
• It is not okay for adults to hurt children
• You will have to report
Contact Numbers

Child Protection Hotline

24hrs 1800 700 250

Alice Springs
Urban 8955 6001
Remote 8955 6001

Casuarina
8922 7111

Darwin Rural
8922 8474

Nhulunbuy
8987 0400

Palmerston
8999 4789

Katherine
8973 8600

Tennant Creek
8962 4334
Phone: 8944 9300

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