Department of Children & Family Services

Building a Stronger Louisiana

Mandated Reporter Portal Online Reporting Guide

Department of Children & Family Services
Building a Stronger Louisiana

Your Role

Mandated reporters are an integral part of the protection of children in the State of Louisiana. Individuals who frequently work with children are often the first adults to see signs of child abuse or neglect. The Department of Children and Family Services depends on mandated reporters to help keep Louisiana's children safe and healthy.

Legal Definitions of Child Abuse, Neglect, Caretaker and Child

The Louisiana Children's Code defines child abuse and neglect by a parent or cartaker as follows.

Abuse means any one of the following acts which seriously endanger the physical, mental, or emotional health and safety of the child:

- The infliction, attempted infliction, or, as a result of inadequate supervision, the allowance of the infliction or attempted infliction of physical or mental injury upon the child by a parent or any other person.
- The exploitation or overwork of a child by a parent or any other person, including but not limited to commercial sexual exploitation of the child.
- The involvement of the child in any sexual act with a parent or any other person, or the aiding or toleration by the parent, caretaker, or any other person of the child's involvement in any of the following:
  - Any sexual act with any other person.
  - Pornographic displays.
  - Any sexual activity constituting a crime under the laws of this state.
  - A coerced abortion conducted upon a child.
  - Female genital mutilation as defined by R.S. 14:43.4.

Neglect means the refusal or unreasonable failure of a parent or caretaker to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, care, treatment, or counseling for any injury, illness, or condition of the child, as a result of which the child's physical, mental, or emotional health and safety is substantially threatened or impaired. Neglect includes prenatal neglect.

Consistent with Article 606(B), the inability of a parent or caretaker to provide for a child due to inadequate financial resources shall not, for that reason alone, be considered neglect. Whenever, in lieu of medical care, a child is being provided treatment in accordance with the tenets of a well-recognized religious method of healing which has a reasonable, proven record of success, the child shall not, for that reason alone, be considered to be neglected or maltreated.

However, nothing herein shall prohibit the court from ordering medical services for the child when there is a substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare.

Prenatal neglect means exposure to chronic or severe use of alcohol or the unlawful use of any controlled dangerous substance, or in a manner not lawfully prescribed, which results in symptoms of withdrawal in the newborn or the presence of a controlled substance or a metabolic thereof in his body, blood, urine, or meconium that is not the result of medical treatment, or observable and harmful effects in his physical appearance or functioning.

Caretaker means any person legally obligated to provide or secure adequate care for a child, including a parent, tutor, guardian, legal custodian, foster home parent, an employee of a public or private day care center, an operator or employee of a registered family child day care home, or other person providing a residence for the child.

Child means any person under 18 years of age who, prior to juvenile proceedings, has not been judicially emancipated under Civil Code Article 366 or emancipated by marriage under Civil Code Article 367.

Mandated Reporter Portal

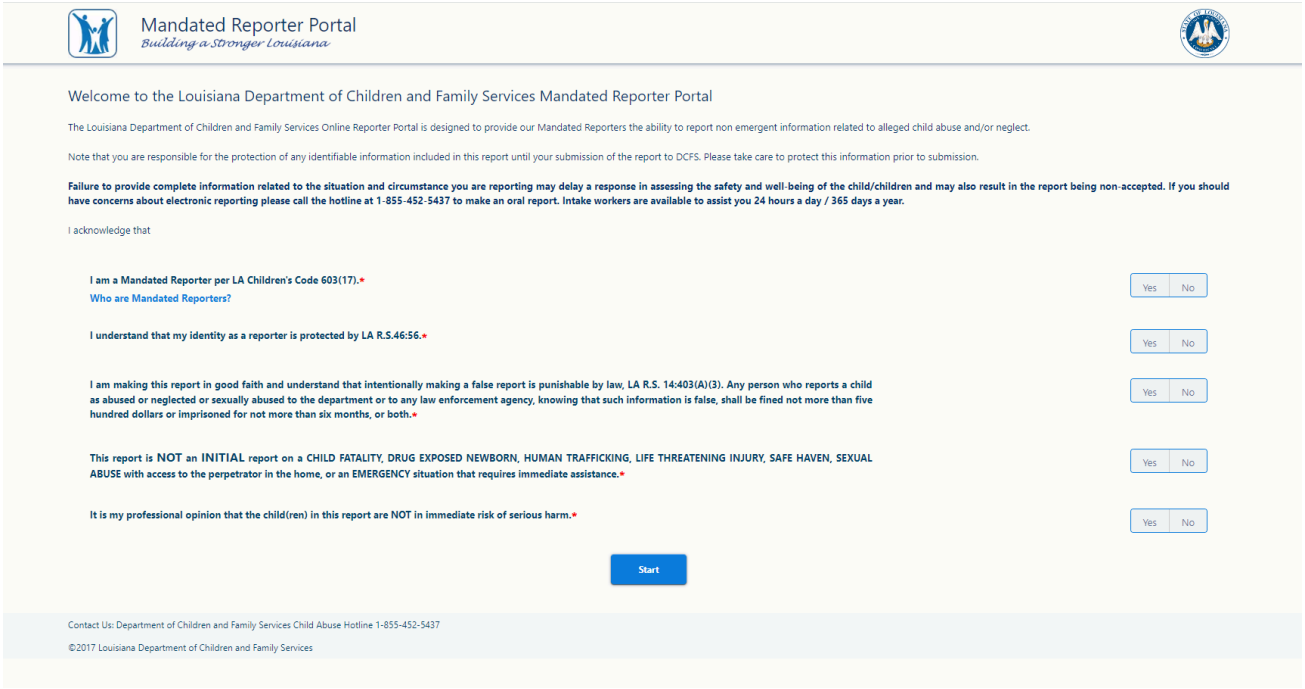
The DCFS Online Reporter Portal provides mandated reporters the ability to report non-emergent reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect that do not require immediate assistance. All other reports shall be reported to the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437). The online report portal can be found at dcfs.la.gov and is available 24 hours a day/365 days a year.

Initial Acknowledgements

Before completing the online form, you must answer a few questions to ensure you are reporting in the right place.

If this report is about a child fatality, life threatening injury, a drug exposed newborn, human trafficking, a Safe Haven relinquishment, sexual abuse, or if a child is in immediate danger, **DO NOT** enter a report here. **You are legally required to call the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437) or make a report in person at any Child Welfare office.**

Entering an emergency report in the portal may delay the Department's response to a child in an unsafe environment.



Completing an Online Portal Report

Providing a detailed report, with as much information as you have, helps in the assessment and determination if the report meets the legal criteria of abuse or neglect. Please provide as much detail as possible. If the legal criteria is not met, DCFS cannot intervene.

Louisiana Children's Code Article 610, **https://legis.la.gov/legis/law.aspx?d=73202**, states that a report of suspected child abuse or neglect shall contain specific information if it is known.

Helpful Information

- **Do you have ongoing contact with the family/victim?**
  Specifying the nature and frequency of your contact can help us understand how chronic or severe the reported concerns are.

- **Are you a Law Enforcement Officer?**
  If yes, please include a case/item number for reference if applicable.

- **Are you medical personnel?**
  If yes, please include specific information about diagnoses and/or details regarding necessary medical treatment or care. Is the child in need of medical attention, or is there a health risk if they do not receive recommended medication/treatment?

- **Are you school personnel?**
  If yes, please provide historical information, if known, to assist with assessment of ongoing concerns of abuse and/or neglect. For example: You have known this family and taught several of their children over the years. The concerns being reported today have been observed over many years; OR you met the child/family one week ago when the child enrolled in the school and you do not know any information about past abuse/neglect.

- All mandated reporters
  Are you aware of any other professionals and/or services that the family is involved with and for what reason, if known?

Information Checklist

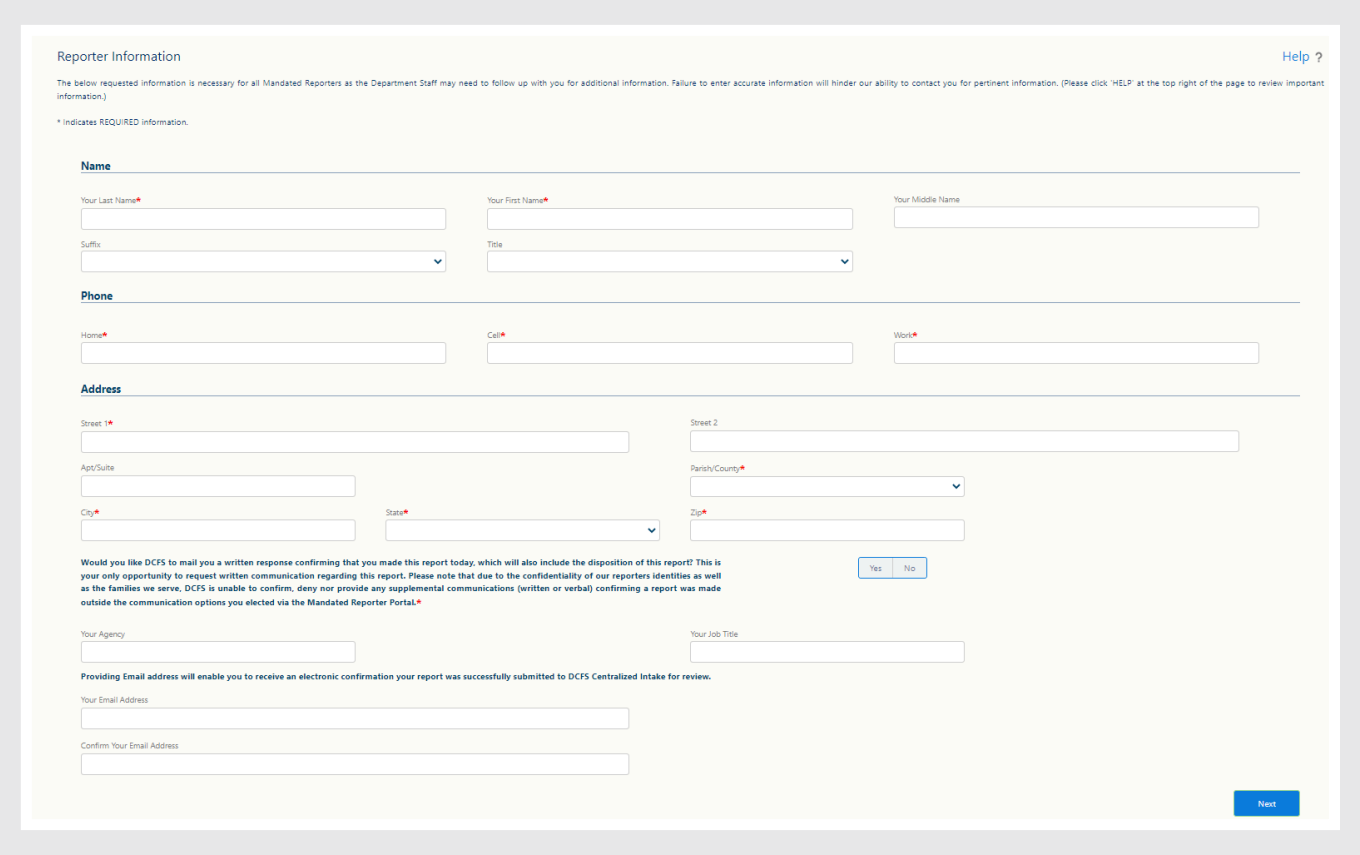
Be prepared to provide information, if known, in the following areas. Having as much information as possible, by all mandated reporters involved, helps in the assessment and determination of a report meeting the legal criteria of abuse and neglect.

- ☐ Name, address, age, sex, and race of the child
- ☐ If the child has special needs
- ☐ Nature, extent, cause of the child's injuries or endangered condition
- ☐ Name and address of the child's parent(s) or other caretaker
  If you don't know the name and address of the child or the caretaker, you must be able to provide sufficient information to reasonably expect a worker to locate the child (alleged victim) and the caretaker
- ☐ Current location of the child
- ☐ The names and ages of all other members of the child's household
- ☐ An account of how the child and situation came to your attention
- ☐ Any explanation of the cause of the child's injury or condition
- ☐ The name of the person or people who are thought to be the perpetrator or have contributed to the harm or injury to the child
- ☐ Any additional relevant information about the child, his condition or situation
- ☐ Any current safety concerns, what you think is necessary to assure the child's safety and any family member and/or others who may be able to protect the child

Remember, be as specific as possible.

Reporter Information

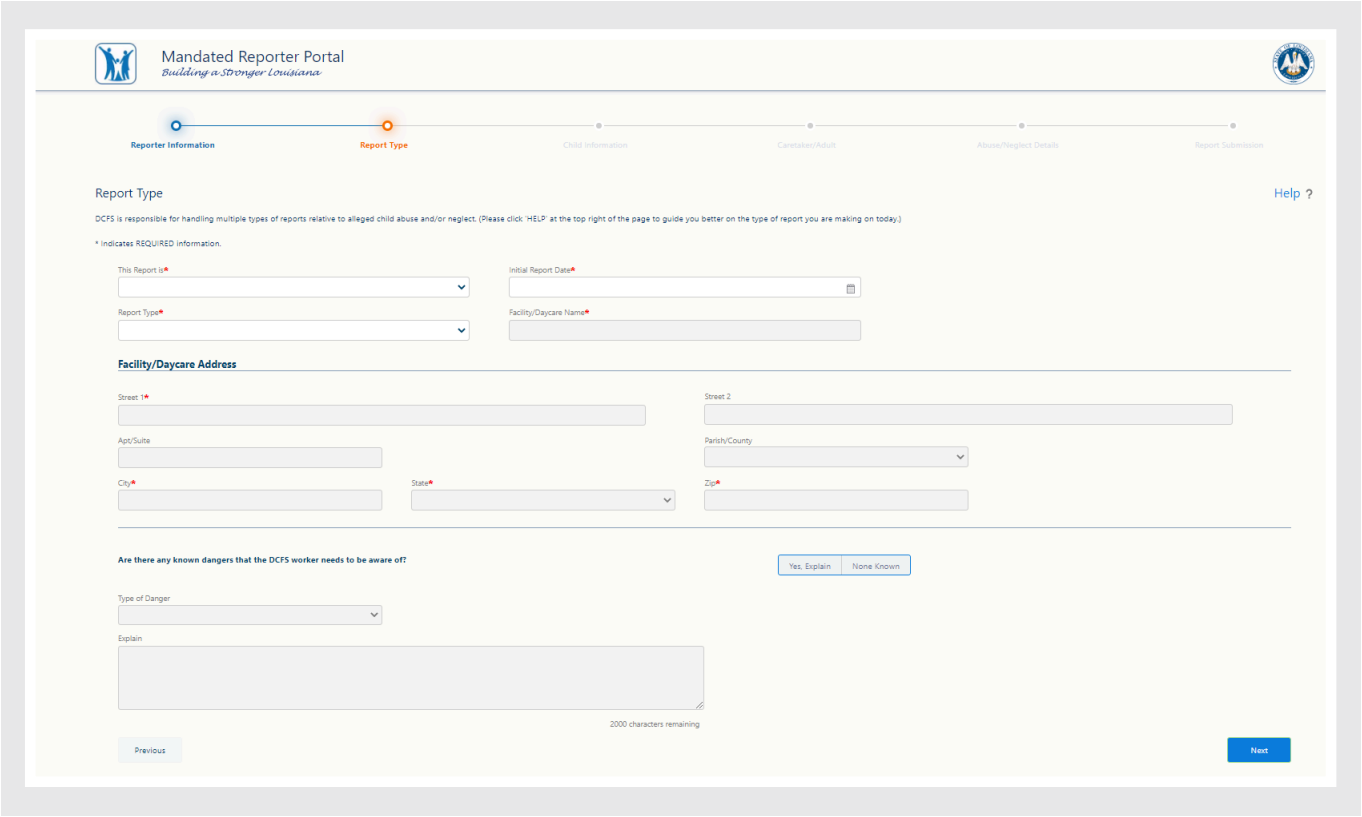
Once you have provided your full name, phone number and address, you can choose to submit your email address if you would like to know that your report was successfully submitted.



Report Type

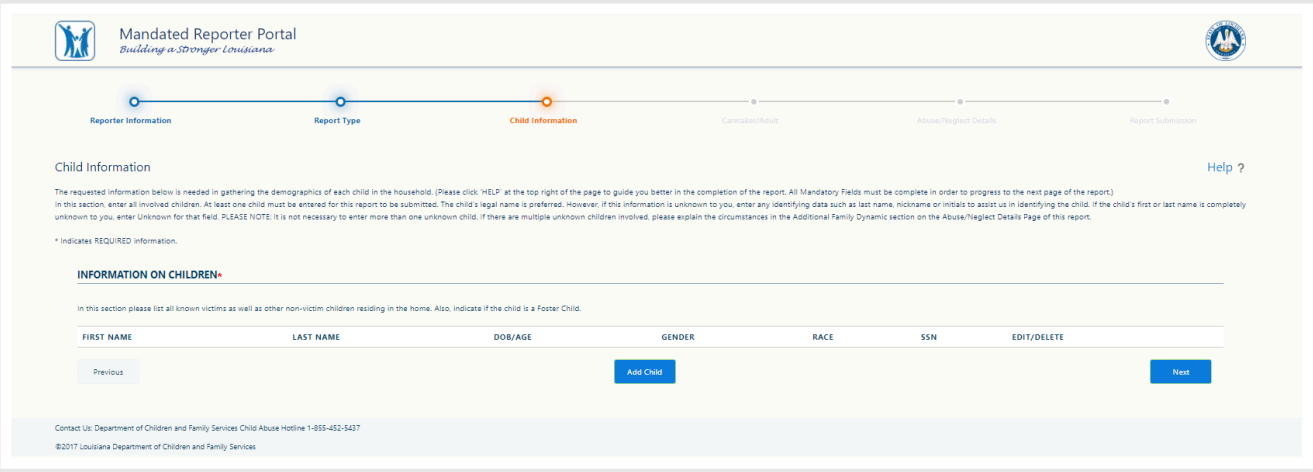
This section asks for details about the location where the alleged abuse and/or neglect took place.

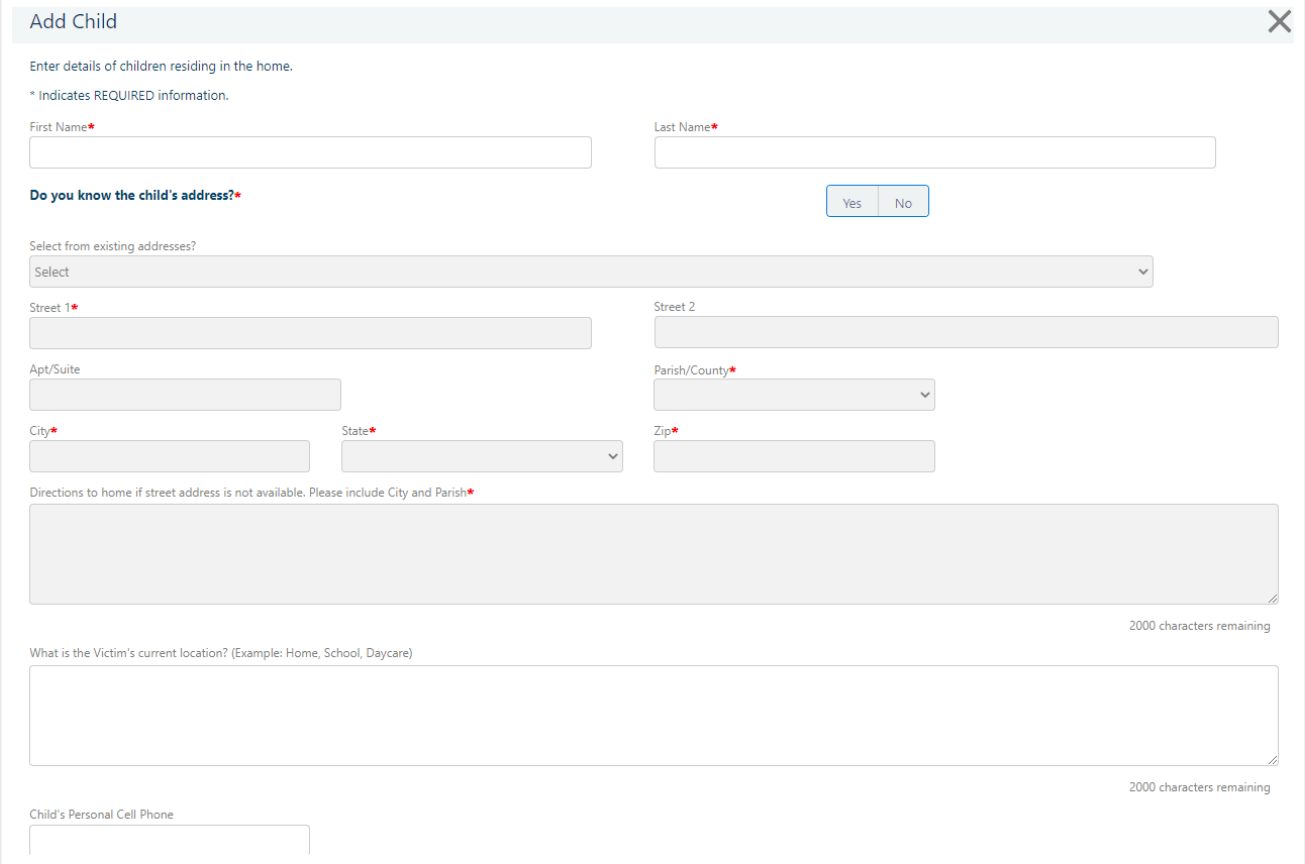
Describe any additional risks or dangers associated with this location (or any other location) that an investigator may encounter, such as vicious dogs/animals, health hazards, or high crime area.



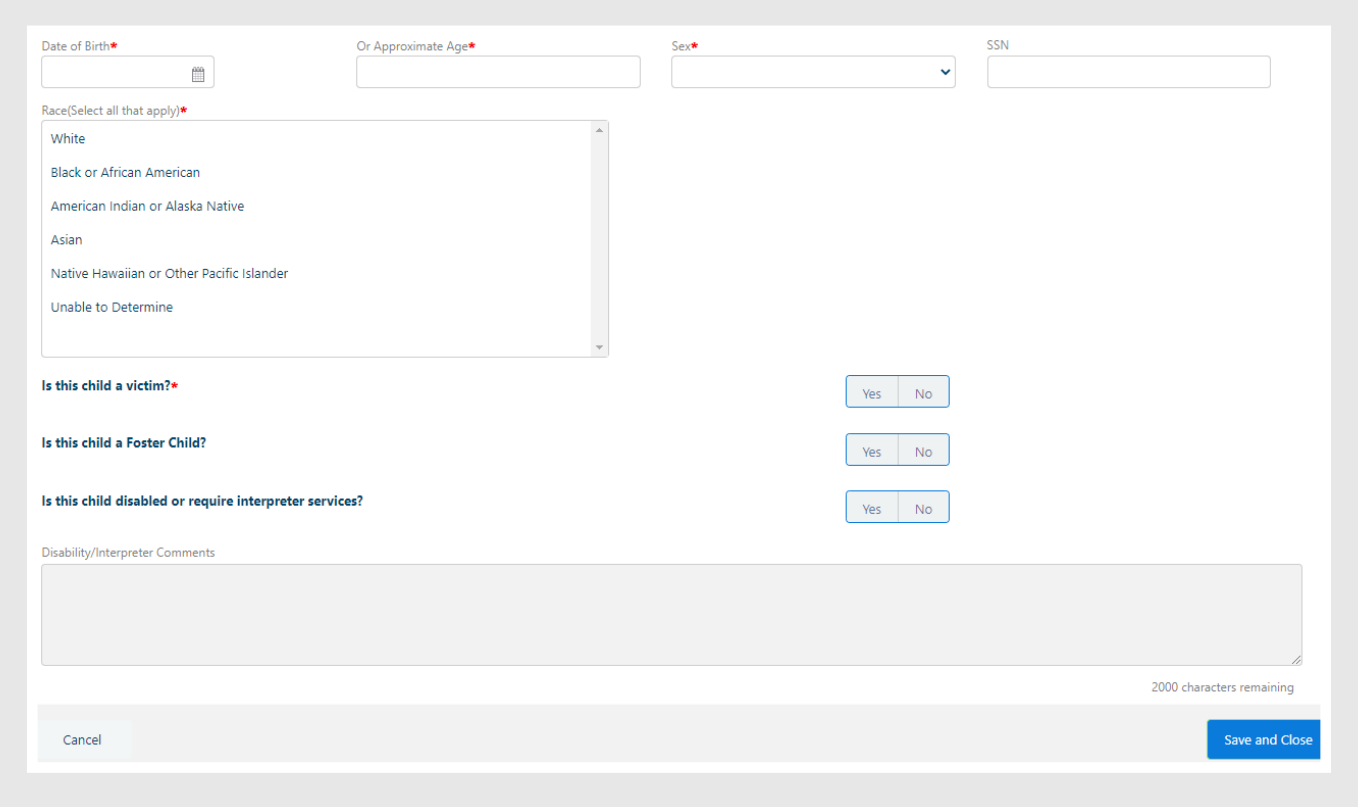
Child Information

Here you will enter each victim's personal information, as well as any other child known to be living in the home.



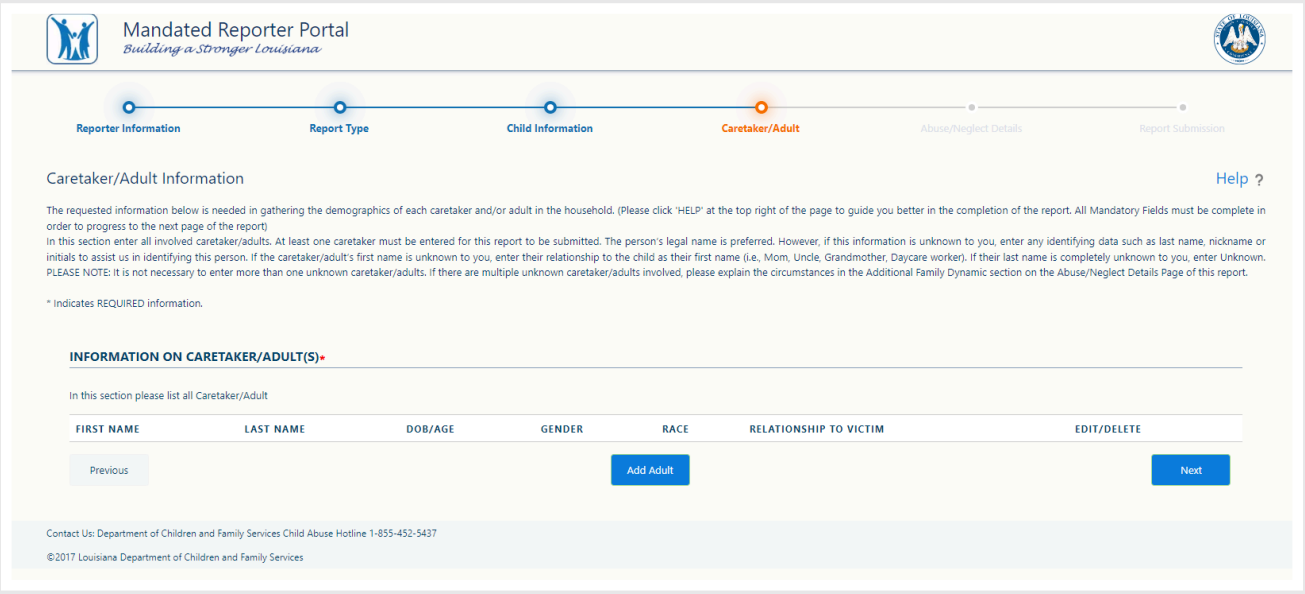


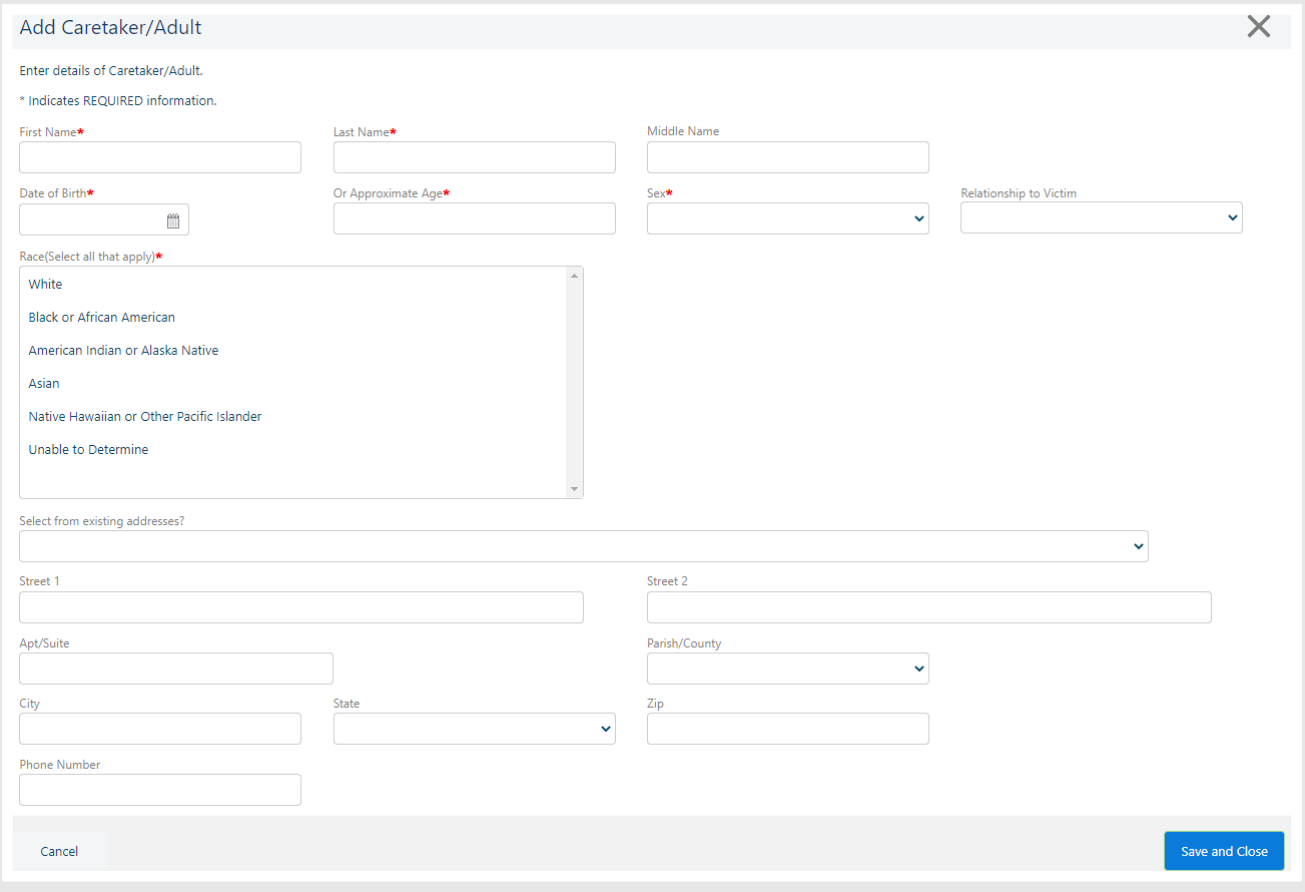
Child Information



Adult Information

Include all known information about the caretaker(s) and other involved adults. Remember that the Agency only investigates parents and caretakers as defined by the Louisiana Children's Code. See the definition of a **caretaker** on page 2.

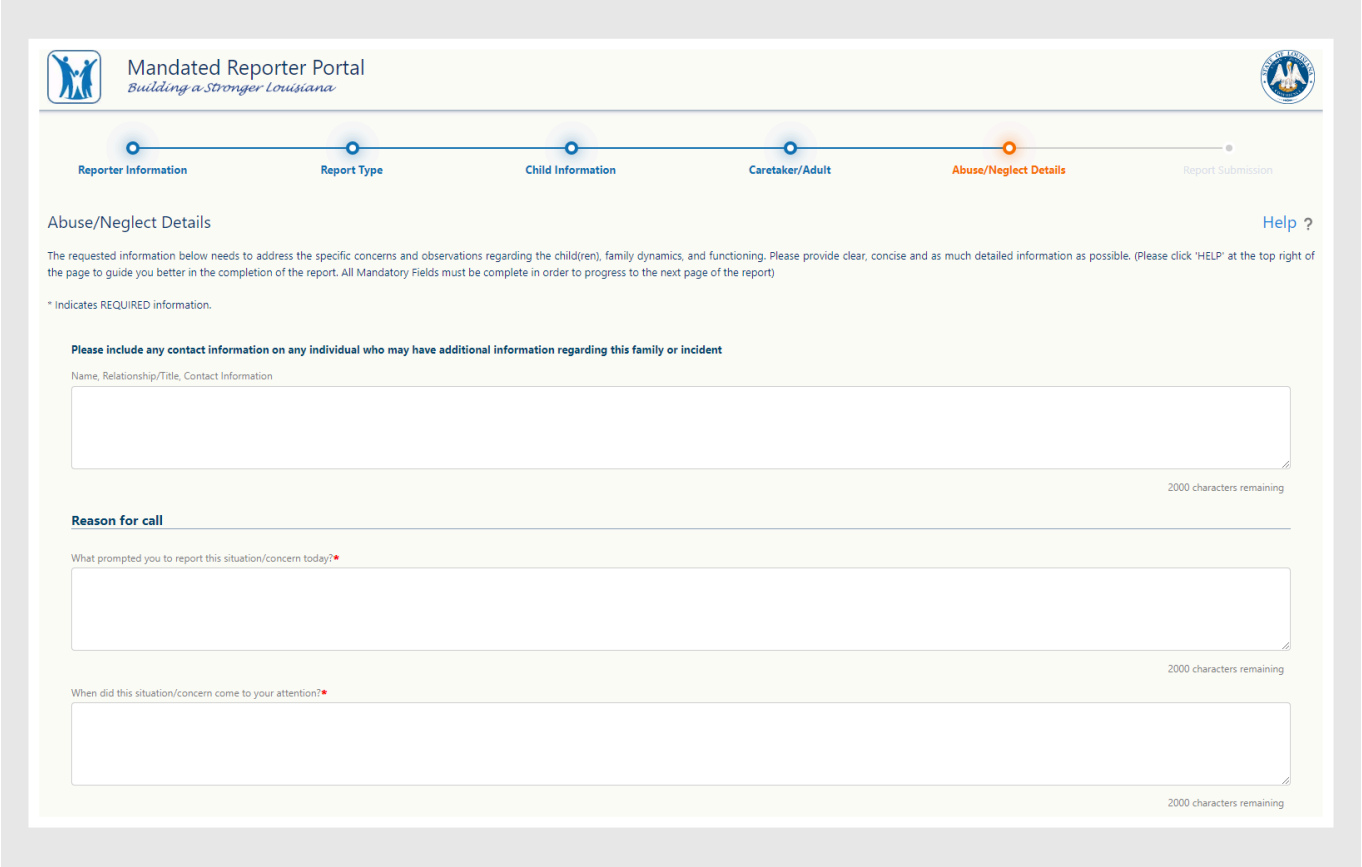


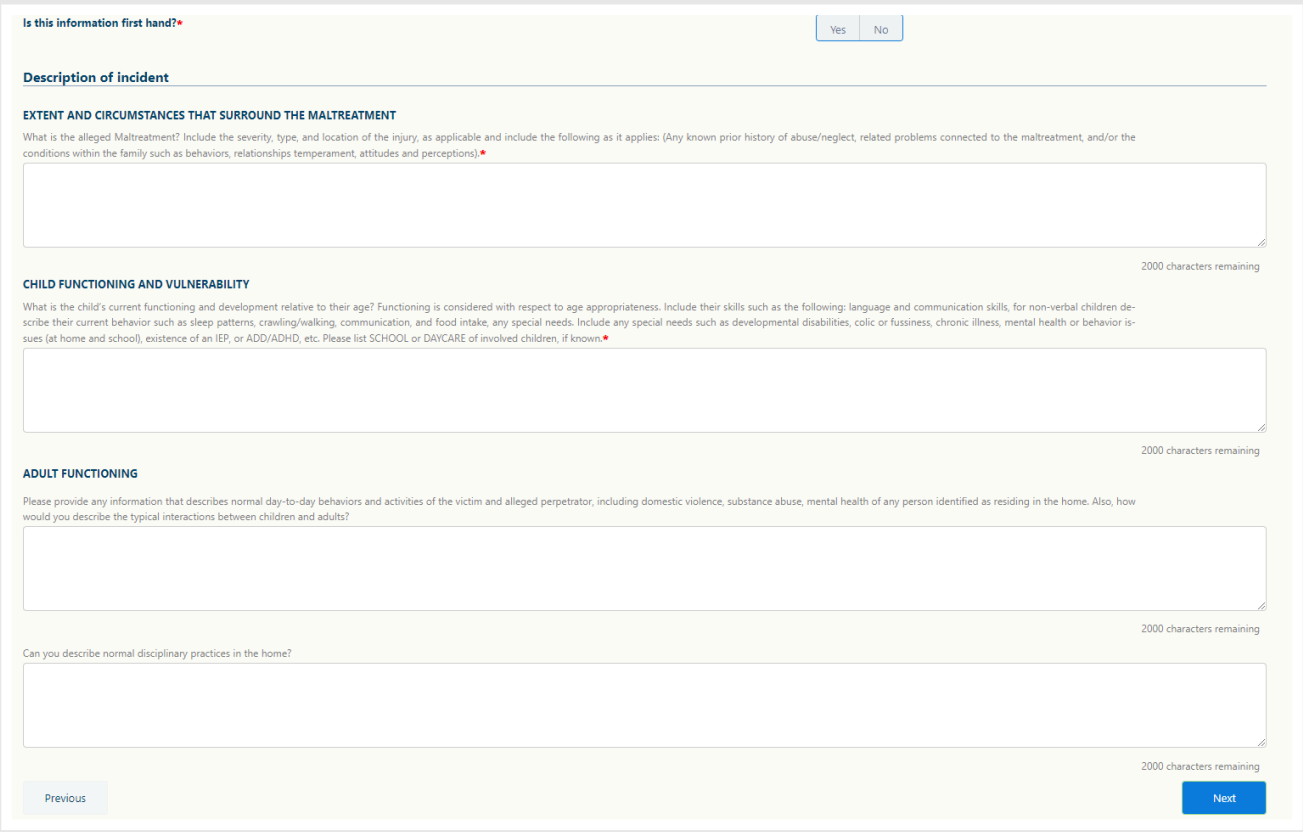


Abuse/Neglect Details

This is where you will describe the circumstances leading to your report, the extent of the alleged abuse and neglect, and any additional information you may have about the relationship between the child and perpetrator.

This section needs to be filled out as thoroughly as possible to facilitate effective decision making.




Is this information first hand?*
Yes
No
Description of incident
EXTENT AND CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SURROUND THE MALTREATMENT
What is the alleged Maltreatment? Include the severity, type, and location of the injury, as applicable and include the following as it applies: (Any known prior history of abuse/neglect, related problems connected to the maltreatment, and/or the conditions within the family such as behaviors, relationships temperament, attitudes and perceptions).*
2000 characters remaining
CHILD FUNCTIONING AND VULNERABILITY
What is the child's current functioning and development relative to their age? Functioning is considered with respect to age appropriateness. Include their skills such as the following: language and communication skills, for non-verbal children describe their current behavior such as sleep patterns, crawling/walking, communication, and food intake, any special needs. Include any special needs such as developmental disabilities, colic or fussiness, chronic illness, mental health or behavior issues (at home and school), existence of an IEP, or ADD/ADHD, etc. Please list SCHOOL or DAYCARE of involved children, if known.*
2000 characters remaining
ADULT FUNCTIONING
Please provide any information that describes normal day-to-day behaviors and activities of the victim and alleged perpetrator, including domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health of any person identified as residing in the home. Also, how would you describe the typical interactions between children and adults?
2000 characters remaining
Can you describe normal disciplinary practices in the home?
2000 characters remaining
Previous
Next

Physical Abuse Scenario - Tommy

Reason For Call

Insufficient Reporting Examples

1. What prompted you to report this situation/concern today?
Physical abuse.

2. When did this situation/concern come to your attention?
Unknown.

There is no specific information about when, how, or in what context this information came to your attention. When was the most recent appointment? How do you know there was abuse? What are the circumstances under which you observed or became aware of the incident(s)?

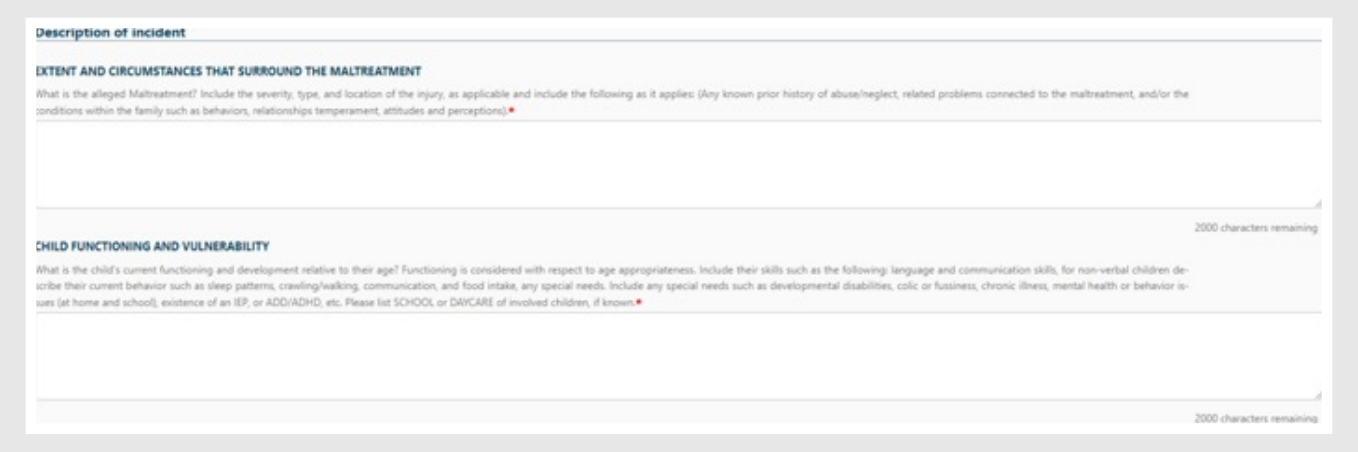
Sufficient Reporting Examples

1. What prompted you to report this situation/concern today?
I observed an injury on the child and when asked, the child stated the parent caused it by hitting them this morning.

2. When did this situation/concern come to your attention?
This morning, when the child arrived at school.

Explains when, how, and in what context this information came to your attention.

Description of the Incident


Description of incident

EXTENT AND CIRCUMSTANCES THAT SURROUND THE MALTREATMENT

What is the alleged Maltreatment? Include the severity, type, and location of the injury, as applicable and include the following as it applies: (Any known prior history of abuse/neglect, related problems connected to the maltreatment, and/or the conditions within the family such as behaviors, relationships temperament, attitudes and perceptions).*

2000 characters remaining

CHILD FUNCTIONING AND VULNERABILITY

What is the child's current functioning and development relative to their age? Functioning is considered with respect to age appropriateness. Include their skills such as the following: language and communication skills, for non-verbal children describe their current behavior such as sleep patterns, crawling/walking, communication, and food intake, any special needs. Include any special needs such as developmental disabilities, colic or fussiness, chronic illness, mental health or behavior issues (at home and school), existence of an IEP, or ADD/ADHD, etc. Please list SCHOOL or DAYCARE of involved children, if known.*

2000 characters remaining

Insufficient Reporting Examples

3. What is the alleged maltreatment?
It appears that the mother hit the child.

There is no specific information about the event(s) that occurred, when or where or how the abuse occurred, or whether it was the first time or part of a pattern.

4. What is the child's current functioning and development relative to their age?
Tommy is in kindergarten.

There is no specific information about the child's developmental abilities, special or medical needs, or other vulnerabilities, such as whether they can communicate boundaries or express emotions.

Sufficient Reporting Examples

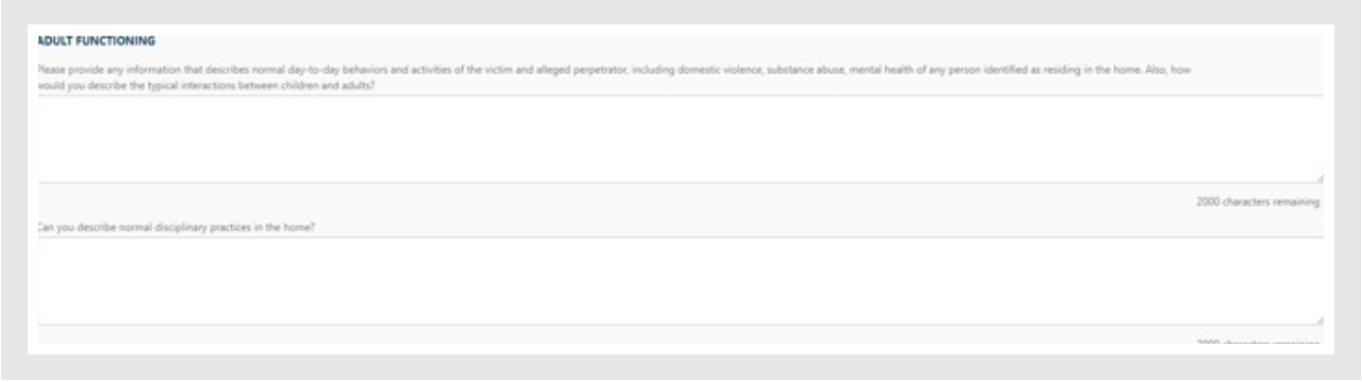
3. What is the alleged maltreatment?
Tommy arrived in class with a slight and fading bruise under his left eye. When I asked him if he was okay, he said he is fine because Mom told him how sorry she was and gave him ice. I sent Tommy to the school nurse to examine the injury. Tommy later told me that his mom hit him in the eye with her elbow because he would not sit down and buckle up when they were leaving for school. I am unsure if the act was purposeful, but in the 3 months he has been in school, he has been observed with bruises on 4 different occasions.

Provides specific information about the events that occurred, including where and how the abuse occurred, and by whom. Also indicates whether this is an ongoing pattern of abuse with a likelihood of reoccurring.

4. What is the child's current functioning and development relative to their age?
Tommy has an educational plan due to speech issues. He is very intelligent, but receives additional support to help with his language. Tommy has told me he has a baby brother who was born last year. Tommy states his brother stays home with his mom while he is at school. Tommy doesn't appear to have any medical conditions.

Provides specific information about the child's developmental abilities and medical needs, to the extent known. Also provides information about the child's siblings, to the extent known.

Adult Functioning



Insufficient Reporting Examples

5. Please provide any information that describes normal day-to-day behaviors and activities of the victims and alleged perpetrator.
Tommy lives with his mother, a single parent.

6. Can you describe normal disciplinary practices in the home?
Spanking.

There is no specific information about the child's home life and relationships with their caretakers, about their interactions or behaviors, or about the typical disciplinary practices used in the home.

Sufficient Reporting Examples

5. Please provide any information that describes normal day-to-day behaviors and activities of the victims and alleged perpetrator.
The mother is a single parent, and Tommy told me he doesn't have a father. However, there is a male in the home, who I believe is the baby's father. Tommy refers to the male adult as Joey. I have not had direct interaction with either Joey or the mother.

6. Can you describe normal disciplinary practices in the home?
Tommy states he does not like to get in trouble because he gets spankings. I do not know which adult disciplines Tommy. Tommy has told me in the past that he is spanked with a belt on his hands or hit on the bottom with a broomstick.

Provides specific information about the child's home life and relationships with their caretakers, as well as limitations the parents may have, to the extent known. Also provides specific information about the disciplinary practices in the home.

• Neglect Scenario - Multiple Children

Reason For Call

Insufficient Reporting Examples

1. What prompted you to report this situation/concern today?
The parents abuse drugs and fight.

2. When did this situation/concern come to your attention?
Not applicable.

There is no specific information about when, how, or in what context this information came to your attention. When was the most recent appointment? How do you know there was abuse? What are the circumstances under which you observed or became aware of the incident(s)?

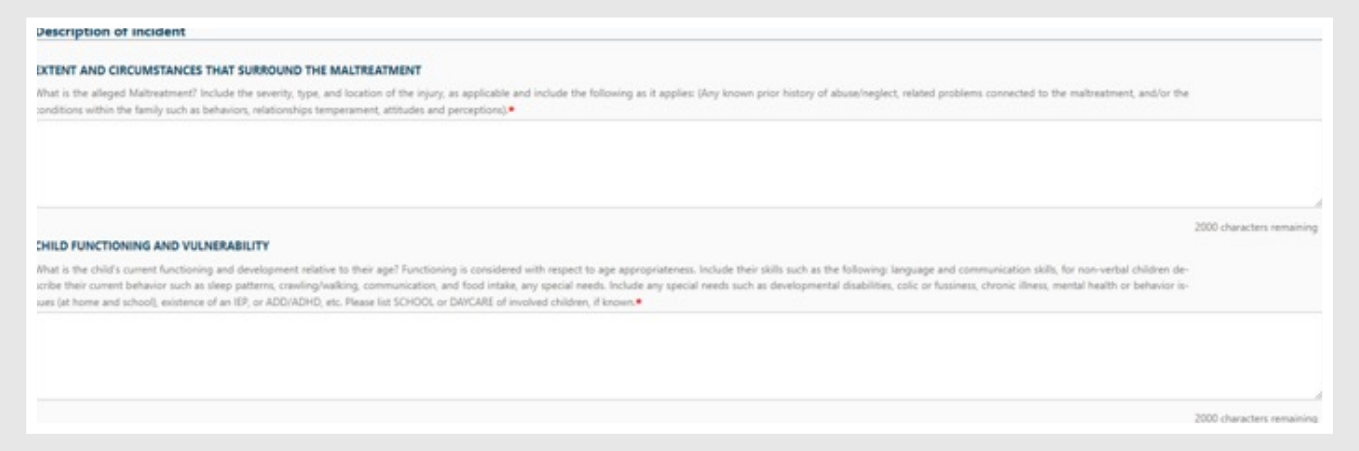
Sufficient Reporting Examples

1. What prompted you to report this situation/concern today?
There is ongoing domestic violence and substance abuse in the household. Today, the parents were arrested for a physical altercation, and drugs were located in the home.

2. When did this situation/concern come to your attention?
I was dispatched to the home after a 911 call

Explains when, how, and in what context this information came to your attention.

Description of the Incident



Insufficient Reporting Examples

3. What is the alleged maltreatment?
The parents abuse drugs and fight.

There is no specific information about the event(s) that occurred, when or where or how the abuse occurred, or whether it was the first time or part of a pattern.

4. What is the child's current functioning and development relative to their age?
There are three children.

There is no specific information about the child's developmental abilities, special or medical needs, or other vulnerabilities, such as whether they can communicate boundaries or express emotions.

Sufficient Reporting Examples

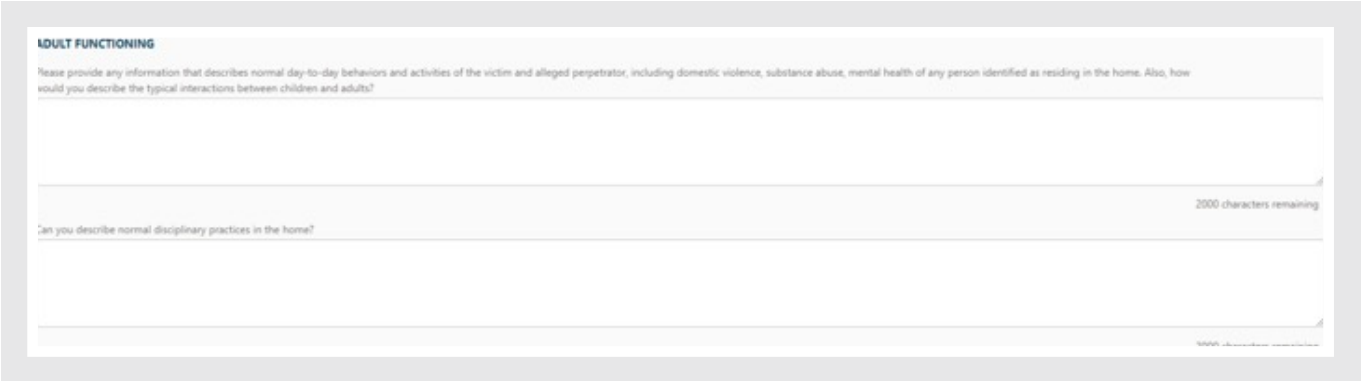
3. What is the alleged maltreatment?
Police were called to the home because the parents were fighting. The children were home when this happened, and the oldest called 911. Both parents were arrested on domestic violence, and drug charges. Marijuana was found in the home. An out-of-town relative was contacted to pick the children up, which is why the children are not at school today. I have known the family for 3 years, and the children have reported violence between the parents numerous times. The last time, one month ago, the mother stated she was moving and divorcing the father. However, the children told me that they went back home because mom and dad were nice again.

Provides specific information about the events that occurred, including where and how the abuse occurred, and by whom. Also indicates whether this is an ongoing pattern of abuse with a likelihood of reoccurring.

4. What is the child's current functioning and development relative to their age?
I am most familiar with the oldest child, TJ. TJ has 2 younger siblings, but they do not attend the same school. TJ is physically disabled and has Cerebral Palsy. TJ has limited functioning and requires assistance to get to/from class, use the restroom, etc. TJ is a very sweet, smart child. He was held back in kindergarten, but is currently on target in 7th grade. It has taken many years to establish trust with him, and it takes him a while to open up to new staff. He struggles with communicating verbally when he is nervous or meets new people. His siblings do not have any disabilities that I am aware of. I do not know where they attend school.

Provides specific information about the child's developmental abilities and medical needs, to the extent known. Also provides information about the child's siblings, to the extent known.

Adult Functioning



Insufficient Reporting Examples

5. Please provide any information that describes normal day-to-day behaviors and activities of the victims and alleged perpetrator.
It appears that the father hit the child.

6. Can you describe normal disciplinary practices in the home?
There is none.

There is no specific information about the child's home life and relationships with their caretakers, about their interactions or behaviors, or about the typical disciplinary practices used in the home.

Sufficient Reporting Examples

5. Please provide any information that describes normal day-to-day behaviors and activities of the victims and alleged perpetrator.
I have known the mother and father for many years since TJ started school in our parish. In my interactions with both Mom and Dad, it appears the situation has worsened over time. When TJ was young, his mother was very engaged with his teachers. However, the father has stayed in and out of jail for drugs. The mother and father have both struggled with drug use over the years, which has caused concerns for TJ and his siblings. In the last 2 years, the mother is difficult to reach for emergencies and is sometimes late bringing/picking up TJ from school. Last week, she came to the school for a meeting with the principal and became very angry/defensive during the conversation. It appeared she had difficulty staying awake/alert. I am aware that the father was arrested previously for violence against the mother last year.

6. Can you describe normal disciplinary practices in the home?
I am not aware of any discipline practices in the home. In my experience, it does not appear the children receive discipline and are mainly allowed to do anything at any time.

Provides specific information about the child's home life and relationships with their caretakers, as well as limitations the parents may have, to the extent known. Also provides specific information about the disciplinary practices in the home.

THANK YOU!

Mandated Reporters play an integral role in maintaining the safety of Louisiana's children and families. We thank you for working with DCFS to ensure the safety and security of our state's children.

Follow the QR code to access the Mandated Reporter Online Portal

If you are interested in a training refresher, use this QR code to access the Mandated Reporter Training

www.dcfs.la.gov/MandatedReporters

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