



Protecting Yourself Against Child Abuse/Neglect Allegations

You are a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect. Make sure you understand the scope of your responsibilities under your state law. You must report all children at risk. If you are not sure if you should report an incident, report it to your licensor and let the authorities determine if action should be taken. You cannot be sued for reporting an incident that turns out not to be child neglect or abuse.

To reduce the chances that you will be accused of abuse or neglect:

- Stay informed about the latest information on child development
- Follow your state's licensing regulations, particularly with regards to supervision and corporal punishment
- Monitor your own stress level to reduce errors in judgment
- Document observations about marks or bruises on children
- Keep your licensor informed about all conflicts with parents

If you are accused of child abuse or neglect, follow these steps:

- Be truthful in answering all questions from your licensor, an investigator from child protection, or the police
- Keep a chronological record of all events associated with an investigation (including your observations of the child, and conversations with parents and the authorities)
- Report any allegations to your business liability insurance agent and ask for advice. They may hire an attorney to defend you
- If the authorities are conducting a serious child abuse investigation, hire an attorney to protect yourself and your business

This handout was produced by Think Small (www.thinksmall.org). For additional family child care business publications, contact Think Small's publishing division, Redleaf Press, at 800-423-8309 or visit www.redleafpress.org.