

DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS...

Are the Children Safe at Home?

SCHOOLS

Teachers, counselors, and all school staff members understand the importance of child welfare referrals. Now that schools are closed, referrals are down. It's doubtful that abuse and neglect is down however, as parents are worried, stressed and stuck at home.

Your contact with students is different, but you can still be their hero.

We need YOU... to check on the children.

Reporting child abuse and neglect is a more important than ever.

While you're conducting online classes, ask how they're doing – emotionally and mentally. Look for signs that the child is scared, unsafe or neglected. If you haven't heard from a student in a few days, call and check in, or do a drive-by or porch visit. Reach out to students you know were at risk before COVID-19 hit our community. If there are any signs that a child or family is overwhelmed, call the hotline. You may be the only person to act.

Questions to ask the children:

- How is everyone getting along today?
- Are you worried about anything?
- What are you doing for fun?

Questions to ask the parents:

- Is everyone okay?
- Can you get everything you need?
- Do you need any help right now?

KEEP PROTECTING THE CHILDREN

CONTINUE TO BE A SUPPORTIVE, CARING ADULT IN THEIR LIVES

- Checking in regularly with encouraging messages.
- Ask questions to engage children, such as "Give me one word for how you're feeling today."

LOOK FOR SIGNS OF CONCERN.

- Truancy-lack of virtual attendance or uncompleted assignments (for those with internet access)
- No contact with a family member after repeated calls or messages.
- You see or hear a possible danger in the child's environment or notice a change in the child's mood or behavior

MAKE AN EXTRA EFFORT, IF A CHILD:

- Has a history of emotional, sexual, physical abuse or neglect.
- Is responsible for other children or lives in a stressful family situation.
- Requires assistance due to physical, mental, behavioral disabilities or delays.

YOU ARE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE...AND LEGALLY PROTECTED.

- School personnel are mandated reporters. If you suspect something, call the hotline.
- No administrator or supervisor may impede or inhibit any report.
- When you report in good faith, you are protected against civil/criminal penalty or adverse employment action.

If you suspect immediate danger, call 911

If you suspect it, report it.

This is a time for family, friends, and neighbors to help each other. If you have any concerns for a child or a family, call PA ChildLine or your local County Children and Youth Agency to make a report.

PA ChildLine: (800)932-0313

Mercer County Children and Youth Services: (724)662-2703