

April 9, 2020

Dear Illinois Educator:

The Department of Children and Family Services wants to thank you for all you are doing to support your students during this crisis. DCFS relies on educators like you to help us protect children. You report abuse and neglect more than any other group of mandated reporters.

With physical school buildings closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the added stress that families are experiencing with the outbreak, your vulnerable students are at greater risk of harm. Since the closure of schools in mid-March, hotline calls have dramatically decreased. This is where DCFS, once again, needs the help of educators.

Remote learning has begun in most districts throughout Illinois. Some of your districts are even doing remote learning with video, allowing teachers to maintain face-to-face contact with students. Our “ask” is that you continue to be mindful of the wellbeing of the children you are tasked with educating. As a mandated reporter, your assessment of the safety of our most vulnerable children is needed now more than ever. Please continue to do as you had in your classrooms and report concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of your students.

Our Hotline is working at full capacity and remains prepared to take calls 24 hours a day. Currently most calls are handled in real-time without requiring a call-back. Our Child Protection Specialists continue to respond to hotline calls with face-to-face contact within 24 hours to assess child safety.

As a reminder, our hotline number is **800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873)**. For non-emergencies, please make your report online at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/safekids/reporting>. To assist you in submitting the required CANTS 5 (*Written Confirmation of Child Abuse/Neglect Report: Mandated Reporters*), you have the option of emailing this document to: DCFS.mandatedreporterform@illinois.gov.

We share your deep commitment to the safety of all the children of Illinois. These unprecedented times require that we forge a stronger partnership more than ever. DCFS cannot do this work without you. I am proud of the work you do as educator and the vital role you play protecting our children.

Sincerely,



Marc D. Smith
Acting Director, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services