

What Happens When You Call FCS

Information gathering: The social worker will ask questions about the child/family and your concerns.

If you are unsure if a report is required, tell the social worker that you are requesting a consult and do not provide any identifying information about the family

If you are making a report, please be prepared with the following:

- Child's name & age
- Child's current location & home address
- Your name
- Circumstances which lead you to suspect abuse or neglect, including general time frame
- Names and ages of other children in the home, if known
- Parent's/Caregivers names(s), preferred language and contact information

Outcome: FCS decides whether the concerns meet investigation criteria.

If evaluated in: A social worker visits the family to assess safety and needs.

If evaluated out: The family may be referred to supportive services.

Reporters are encouraged to share resource information directly with families when safe and appropriate.

Next steps, if evaluated in: If safety concerns exist, FCS will help develop a safety plan and link families with services. If not possible, the child(ren) may be removed.

831-454-2273
SantaCruzHumanServices.org
[/FamilyChildren](#)



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
**Child Youth & Family
Well-Being Partners**

Supportive Resources for Families

Even when a report is not required, families may need help. Encourage them to utilize 211 for support services such as:

- Food banks and meal programs
- Housing resources
- Parenting support and education
- Substance use and mental health services
- School and community-based supports



211SantaCruzCounty.org

Mandated Reporter Decision Tree



Mandated reporters play a vital role in protecting children. Child abuse affects families of any background and can take many types. However, many Family and Children's Services (FCS) calls don't lead to intervention. In Santa Cruz County and across California, the majority of reports do not meet the legal threshold for abuse or neglect.

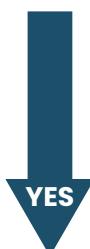
Reporting a family is a serious step. Support should come first, but intervention is essential when there is reasonable suspicion or evidence of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or intentional neglect.

This decision support tool is designed to:

- Help identify when a report to FCS is required.
- Provide guiding questions to distinguish between neglect and family needs due to poverty or other stressors.
- Encourage connection to supportive services whenever possible.
- Explain what happens after a call is made to FCS.

Reports to FCS can permanently impact the lives of children and their families. It is important to be intentional when making the report based on facts about the child and family circumstances. Clear and present concerns about child safety must always be reported.

Did you encounter this situation in your professional role?



NO

You are not required to make the call as a mandated reporter, but you may choose to proceed to the next question.

Immediate Safety: Is the child in immediate danger of serious harm?



Call 911 right away (emergency response required).



UNSURE
UNSURE

Risk of Future Harm: If the situation continues without intervention, is the child likely to suffer intentional serious harm or illness?



Report to FCS.
Call 831-454-2273



Basic Needs: Are the child's needs for food, clothing, shelter, supervision or medical/behavioral health care being met?

NO

Neglect: Does the child's lack of basic needs create a substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness?



Report to FCS.
Call 831-454-2273

NO

Needing help isn't neglect; encourage the family to contact 211 to seek help.

YES

Economic Hardship: Is the concern solely due to the family's economic hardship?

YES

NO

or if other factors exist

Needing help isn't neglect; encourage the family to contact 211 to seek help.

Consult with FCS without providing identifying information about the child or the family.