



# Cross-Reporting Among Responders to Child Abuse and Neglect

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5106a), requires States to make provision for the cooperation of State law enforcement officials and State agencies providing human services in the investigation, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse or neglect.

All 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories have statutes specifying procedures that State agencies must follow in handling reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. In most States, these procedures include requirements for cross-system reporting and/or information sharing among professional entities. Typically, reports are shared

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## Why Cross-Reporting Is Needed

among social services agencies, law enforcement departments, and prosecutors' offices.

In most States, a mandated reporter or other person who is concerned about a child's safety and welfare can make a report of suspected child maltreatment to a reporting hotline, the child protection agency, or a law enforcement agency. State laws require such agencies to share these reports with specific agencies (i.e., cross-report), so that needed information is available to the agency that must respond to the report. For example, child protective services agencies have responsibility for cases in which the suspected abuse or neglect is caused by a parent, family member, or other caregiver. Cases in which the suspected abuse is caused by someone other than a family member, or in which the abuse results in severe injury to the child, are considered crimes and are handled by law enforcement agencies.

This publication is a product of the State Statutes Series prepared by Child Welfare Information Gateway. While every attempt has been made to be as complete as possible, additional information on these topics may be in other sections of a State's code as well as agency regulations, case law, and informal practices and procedures.