

# Implementing Assembly Bill (AB) 2085: Strategies to Enhance Los Angeles County Mandated Reporters' Decision-Making

This tipsheet is intended to help Mandated Reporters better understand and comply with a recent change in California law, specifically AB 2085, which narrowed the legal definition of general neglect.

The following steps are recommended best practices to help Mandated Reporters make accurate and consistent reporting decisions that take AB 2085 into account. Mandated Reporters are not required by law to employ any specific strategy. Remember to **apply critical thinking, care, and compassion throughout.**

## Recommended Decision-Support Steps

### 1 Clarify the concern and how AB 2085 may apply.

Under AB 2085, reportable general neglect has changed to include the child's "substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness" AND exclude "a parent's economic disadvantage."

**When determining whether a situation mandates a report of suspected general neglect to the Child Protection Hotline, consider the following:**

- Is this child's parent/caregiver negligently failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision?
- What information suggests that the potential risk of harm could be **substantial**?
  - (Meaning, without intervention, child is likely to experience serious physical harm or a serious illness in the future.)
- In what way could the concerning situation put the child at risk for **serious physical harm** or **serious illness**, specifically?
- How are the parent/caregiver's economic circumstances and needs playing a role?

### 2 Consider your point of view.

- What questions can I ask myself to ensure I am thinking clearly?
- Am I addressing any potential biases?
- How am I separating facts from assumptions?

### 3 Consult whenever reasonably possible.

- Would discussing the situation with someone else help me make a more informed decision?
- Would it help me check for any biases?

### 4 Complete the General Neglect Decision Tree.

- [Access the Decision Tree guide.](#)

### 5 Decide next steps.



## What to do Next

After completing the **Recommended Decision-Support Steps**, it will be proposed that you take specific action to connect the family to supports and services that address unmet needs and/or make a report.

### *Supporting Families in Need*

There will be times when you determine a report to the Child Protection Hotline is not required, but the family would benefit from supportive services that can be provided in their communities. During these times, the following resources may be helpful:

- Contact your agency's designated community liaison or resource directory to help identify potential community resources
- Visit the [supportingfamilies.lacounty.gov](http://supportingfamilies.lacounty.gov) website
- Find free services at One Degree: [www.1degree.org](http://www.1degree.org)
- Call 211 or visit [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)
- Identify your local [Community Family Resource Centers](#) and/or [Prevention & Aftercare Services](#)
- Call CalHOPE at 833-317-HOPE or visit [www.calhope.org](http://www.calhope.org)
- Connect to support at Find Help: [www.findhelp.org](http://www.findhelp.org)
- **Add any additional resources within your community here:**

---

**Providing supportive services to families in need can prevent child abuse and neglect while improving family wellbeing.**

### *Effective and Supportive Reporting*

If reporting general neglect to the Child Protection Hotline is necessary, you can do so while also being compassionate, supportive, and sensitive to the family's circumstances.

When you have made the decision to report suspected child abuse or neglect, consider these tips:

- Anticipate spending at least 25+ minutes making the report.
- Be prepared with demographic information for the family.
- Reports should be made based on factual information.
- Every detail, no matter how small it may seem, is important.
- Include family strengths, protective factors, and available supports in your verbal and written report.
- You are required to provide your name and contact information to the Child Protection Hotline when making a report and DCFS will not share your identity as the reporter with the family. However, in certain situations, it may be beneficial for you to include the youth and/or family in the reporting process, if you feel comfortable and if doing so does not endanger you or the child. For example, some Mandated Reporters choose to make the call to the Child Protection Hotline with the family and explain the process to them.

**If you know or reasonably suspect that a child has been a victim of abuse or neglect, please contact the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Child Protection Hotline (800-540-4000) as soon as possible.**