

SUMMARY OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE: PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

There are laws in Prince Edward Island under the *Child Protection Act* about what must happen when a person suspects that a child may have been abused or is at risk for abuse. Below is a summary of these laws. ***You are responsible for reporting suspicions of child abuse, not for proving whether or not child abuse has occurred. It is the responsibility a child protection agency to investigate, with police where necessary, and decide on the best plan for the child.***

DUTY TO REPORT

A **person** in Prince Edward Island who suspects that a child may have been abused or is at risk for abuse must immediately report that suspicion to the Director¹.

HOW OLD IS A CHILD PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND?

In Prince Edward Island, a person is a child from birth until his/her 18th birthday.

PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY

If a person reports suspected child abuse, s/he cannot be sued if it is proven that the report was made in good faith, and not to cause trouble for anyone.

FAILURE TO REPORT

If a person fails to report a suspicion to the Director, s/he can be charged and fined up to \$2,000.

CONFIDENTIALITY

There are some relationships that are considered confidential, for example between a doctor and patient, or between clergy and members of the congregation. However, a confidence cannot be kept if child abuse is suspected. No matter what the relationship between people, one must always follow through on the duty to report suspicions of child abuse. The only exception to this is the lawyer-client relationship.

The *Child Protection Act* protects the identity of the person who reported to the Director.

¹ The **Director** refers to the child protection authorities in your province, and not to staff within your own program/agency.