

SUMMARY OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE: SASKATCHEWAN

There are laws in Saskatchewan under the *Child and Family Services 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 of 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 Saskatchewan who believes that a child may have been abused or is at risk for abuse must immediately report the information to an officer.¹

HOW OLD IS A CHILD IN SASKATCHEWAN?

In Saskatchewan, a person is a child from birth until his/her 16th birthday.

PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY

If a person reports suspected child abuse, s/he cannot be sued.

FAILURE TO REPORT

If a person fails to report to an officer, s/he is guilty of an offence and can be charged with a fine of up to \$25,000 or be imprisoned for up to 24 months, or both.

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.

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