

## The Middlesex Children's Advocacy Center Online Training for Mandated Reporters

The Middlesex Children's Advocacy Center in collaboration with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office has launched the state's first online training for mandated reporters on how to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect, Middlesex District Attorneys Gerry Leone announced today.

As of January 1, 2010, mandated reporters who are professionally licensed by the Commonwealth are required to complete a training to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect. The Massachusetts Legislature has designated doctors, nurses, child care providers, teachers, guidance counselors, and others as mandated reporters. This online training was designed to help mandated reporters and **others** who work with children to:

- Understand the legal obligations of mandated reporters
- Recognize possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect
- Know how to respond to a child who discloses abuse
- Know how to file a 51A Report
- Understand what happens after a 51A Report is filed

Although anyone who suspects a child is being abused or neglected can and should file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), mandated reporters are required by law to do so. By the nature of their work, mandated reporters are often the first people to see signs of or be told about abuse and neglect. DCF receives over 75,000 reports of abuse and neglect a year.

It is a crime for mandated reporters to fail to file a 51A Report if, in their professional capacity, they have reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected. The name of a reporter is kept confidential unless ordered by a court.

The website can be found at [middlesexcac.org/51a-omrt/](http://middlesexcac.org/51a-omrt/). The training is free and available to anyone with internet access.

To raise awareness about child abuse and neglect we encourage individuals and communities to support our children with the understanding that every child deserves a safe environment, free from fear, abuse and neglect

<http://middlesexcac.org/51A-reporter-training/>