April is National Child Abuse Awareness Prevention Month

A child is abused or neglected every 47 seconds in the U.S. With all schools and nearly all childcare centers in the state of Tennessee closed this April due to COVID-19, routine reporters — teachers, school counselors, school nurses, daycare workers — are no longer seeing children regularly. Referrals to TDCS Child Abuse Hotline dropped by more than 1,800 in March 2020 compared to March 2019. Though referrals are declining, this does not mean abuse is stopping. Prolonged social distancing measures, experts warn, are particularly harmful to abuse victims who rely on external communities for support.

Remember: BY TENNESSEE STATE LAW, EVERY adult is REQUIRED to report “suspected” cases of child abuse or neglect.

Next steps are left to professionals, but reporting of any suspected cases is a responsibility of EACH and EVERY ONE OF US.

To report child abuse in TN, call the TDCS 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004.

To learn more about reporting, click here for the mandated reporter online training.

In addition, child abuse comes in many forms — physical, sexual, neglect, and exploitation — learn the warning signs.

Please click here for English and for the Spanish version, click here.

For more information, visit children.sworpswebapp.sworps.utk.edu