

Maryland: Child Abuse and Neglect Definitions

Physical Abuse

Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

Abuse means:

The physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care, custody, or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed

Sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not

Neglect

Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

Neglect means the leaving of a child unattended or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate:

That the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm
Mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury

Sexual Abuse

Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

Sexual abuse means any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care, custody, or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member.

Sexual abuse includes incest, rape, sexual offense in any degree, sodomy, and unnatural or perverted sexual practices.

Emotional Abuse

Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

Mental injury means the observable, identifiable, and substantial impairment of a child's mental or psychological ability to function.

Abandonment

This issue is not addressed in the statutes reviewed.

Standards for Reporting

Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701

A report is required when a child is subjected to harm or substantial risk of harm.

Persons Responsible for the Child

Citation: Fam. Law § 5-701