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Video preps educators to report child abuse and neglect when schools reopen

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The [Departments of Social Services](#) and [Elementary and Secondary Education](#), and the Missouri School Boards' Association have created a video to heighten Missouri educator awareness of the increased importance of reporting child abuse and neglect as the new school year begins. Before students return to the classroom, educators can watch "[See Something. Say Something.](#)" a short seven-minute video that highlights the online reporting option, important information, tips, and resources.

"[Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline](#) reports dropped by almost half when students were no longer in the classroom," said **David Wood, Director, Children's Division**. "School personnel are often the first to recognize a child may be a victim or at risk of abuse or neglect. That dramatic drop illustrated the huge impact educators have on keeping children safe as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect under Missouri law."

"Reports to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline typically increase when educators reconnect with students after the summer break," said **Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven**. "Missouri educators develop close relationships with their students, and a particularly troubling effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the significant decline in these reports – largely due to the limited day-to-day interaction between teachers and their students. The ease of using [Missouri's online reporting option](#) allows our teachers, who are mandated reporters, to quickly share any troubling information with the appropriate personnel."

The Department of Social Services urges every Missourian to be especially attentive to the safety and wellbeing of children during COVID-19 and strongly encourages anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-392-3738. The Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline is answered 24-hours a day, every day, all year round.

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AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

TDD / TTY: 800-735-2966

RELAY MISSOURI: 711

The mission of the Department of Social Services is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives. Visit dss.mo.gov to learn more about the Department of Social Services and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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