

HELPLINE INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY CRITERIA:

We are able to assist people resolve issues when...

- Information is provided that indicates a child's safety, well-being or right to a safe, permanent home is at risk and the governmental response to a situation is inadequate, appears to violate state laws and policy and a case is being mishandled.
- A child's rights are being violated and no lawyer or other legal advocate is specifically representing the child's interests. (If action or inaction of the appointed child advocate or legal representative is part of the complaint, this factor does not apply).
- You have exhausted other formal avenues of relief, including agency-based policies/procedures to review a complaint.

IF YOUR SITUATION DOES NOT MEET THESE THREE CRITERIA, WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL.



THE CHILD ADVOCATE IS NOT A FIRST RESPONDER. TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, CALL THE STATE'S CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE AT 1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873)

FOR NON-EMERGENT ISSUES, PLEASE CONTACT HELPLINE

Callers will receive a follow-up call from Helpline staff within one business day. The Helpline operates Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Messages can be left after-hours but a daytime contact must be provided.

Callers will receive appropriate support services, including an initial assessment of the situation, advocacy and recommendations of available resources.

Complaints can also be filed online at childadvocate.nj.gov or you can email us at info@childadvocate.state.nj.us



Promoting Positive Change for Children

240 West State Street, 7th Floor
P.O. Box 092
Trenton, N.J. 08625-0092
Phone: (609) 984-1188 Fax: (609) 292-1433
Email: info@childadvocate.state.nj.us

Helpline: **1-877-543-7864**

**THE CHILD ADVOCATE'S
HELPLINE**

A Resource for Children, Families and Advocates

1-877-543-7864



www.childadvocate.nj.gov



**NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE
CHILD ADVOCATE**

Promoting Positive Change for Children



HELPLINE RESPONDS TO CALLS OF CONCERN

The Child Advocate's Helpline responds to hundreds of inquiries each year from people who are concerned about the safety, education, health or welfare of a child they know. Many involve issues with government agencies responsible for safeguarding, educating and tending to the needs of children.

Through Helpline, trained Child Advocate staff educate parents, caregivers, service providers and other advocates about state systems, available services and their rights to receive those services. In some cases, Child Advocate staff intervenes directly to resolve problems and ensure a positive outcome for the children involved.

WHAT TYPES OF CASES DOES THE CHILD ADVOCATE'S HELPLINE ACCEPT?

The Child Advocate's Helpline primarily responds to issues about specific children and cases involved with government agencies that provide children's services. This can include state agencies, county offices and local government.

YOU SHOULD CALL HELPLINE IF...

- You are concerned about a government agency's response to a situation that affects the safety or well-being of a child you know.
- You need help identifying relevant local, county or state services or resources for a child.
- You need help understanding and navigating a government system that serves children.
- You have exhausted other ways to resolve a complaint or issue that involves a state, county or local child-serving agency.

WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE CONTACTING HELPLINE?

Contact the Relevant Agencies. Before calling or e-mailing us, please try to resolve the problem by contacting the relevant government agency. Many times, an agency official can explain a confusing policy or correct a problem. When you contact an agency, remember to take the steps outlined below.

Gather your information. Have all necessary information in front of you when you try to resolve a problem. Consider writing down the problem and your questions ahead of time.

Talk to the right people and ask questions. Go up the chain of command as necessary until you understand what happened and why.

Keep records of your contacts. This should include names of individuals, their positions and phone numbers and dates and times of the calls. You should also record the issues that were discussed and the information you received from the people with whom you spoke.

Read the information sent to you. It may help clear up a situation.

Consult our Website for helpful links.

If you have followed these suggestions and still can't resolve your problem, contact our Helpline at **1-877-543-7864**, email us at **info@childadvocate.state.nj.us** or visit our website at **www.childadvocate.nj.gov** to file a complaint online.



**THE CHILD ADVOCATE IS NOT A FIRST RESPONDER.
IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED OR NEGLECTED,**

CALL 1-877-NJABUSE

