

**CHECKLIST · FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

IF YOUR CHILD TOLD YOU THE FIRST STEPS, AT YOUR PACE.

If your child has told you that something happened at school, this list covers the first hours and the first week, in order: what to write down, who to report to, what to keep, and what to ask the school for in writing. You can read it without contacting anyone, and you can call us at any point.

THE FIRST HOURS

- ☐ **Write down what your child said, in their own words, with the date and time**
The first account, as close to your child's words as you can manage, is the one that carries the most weight later. Add who was present and what you said back. Keep it somewhere private.
 - ☐ **Stay calm, and let your child know you believe them**
How the first conversation goes shapes whether a child keeps talking. Short, plain reassurance is enough. You do not need to have answers yet.
 - ☐ **Do not question your child repeatedly, or ask leading questions**
Police and child protection agencies use trained interviewers for this. Repeated questions can distress a child and can later be used to argue that the account was shaped. Let them say what they want to say, and write it down.
 - ☐ **Do not confront the school or the adult yet**
A confrontation alerts the person and the school before any official record exists, and things can go missing. The reports below come first. The school hears from you in writing, after.
-

REPORTS TO MAKE

- ☐ **Call the police, or the county child protection line**
Either one starts an official record with a date on it. In an emergency, call 911. The California Department of Social Services lists every county's 24 hour child abuse reporting line.
 - ☐ **See a doctor if there is any physical concern**
A pediatrician or an emergency department can examine your child and write down what they find. Say why you are there so it goes in the chart. The visit is also a place to ask for help for your child.
 - ☐ **Ask the school whether a report was made, and when**
School employees are mandated reporters. Penal Code 11166 requires a report by telephone immediately or as soon as practicably possible, with a written report within 36 hours. You can ask, in one written line, whether a report was made and on what date. The answer, or the lack of one, is worth writing down.
-

RECORDS TO PRESERVE

- ☐ **Messages between your child and the adult, on any app or device**
Screenshot them with the date visible, and then leave the originals alone. Do not reply, and do not delete the thread.
 - ☐ **Your child's phone, tablet, or laptop, as it is**
Change nothing on it. If it is hard to have it in the house, put it in a drawer or hand it to someone you trust. A device can be examined later in a way that screenshots cannot.
 - ☐ **Photos, and anything the adult gave your child**
Gifts, notes, and photos are easy to throw away. Put them in a bag with the date on it instead.
 - ☐ **Your child's schedule, and the adult in charge of each part of it**
Classes, practices, clubs, rides, and who was responsible for each room or field, hour by hour. The school keeps its own version. Yours, written now, is the one that starts with your child.
 - ☐ **The names of adults and students who were present or nearby**
First names and roles are enough. Witnesses are easier to find now than in a year.
 - ☐ **Any earlier concern you raised, and who you raised it with**
An email to a teacher, a call to the office, a note in a parent portal. If you raised something before, find the date. What the school knew, and when, is a question every case asks.
-

REQUESTS TO THE SCHOOL

- ☐ **The district's written policy on abuse, harassment, and reporting**
Ask for the current version and the version in effect at the time, with dates. The policy shows what the school said it would do.
 - ☐ **The name and contact information of the Title IX coordinator**
Education Code 221.61 requires the school to post the Title IX coordinator's name, phone number, and email on its website. If it is not there, ask for it in writing. That is the person the school designates to receive complaints of sexual harassment.
 - ☐ **The incident report, or written confirmation that one exists**
Ask for a copy of any report involving your child, or confirmation that one was written and when. Do not add your own account to the request.
 - ☐ **Every request in writing, without a narrative of your own**
One or two lines, by email, so there is a dated record. Say what you are asking for, not what happened. The account of what happened belongs in the police report and in your own notes, not in an email to the school.
-

PEOPLE SAFE TO TELL

☐ **A therapist who works with children, and one for you**

Ask the pediatrician or the police for a referral to a child advocacy center or a therapist who works with children. You do not have to find the right person today.

☐ **One adult you trust**

Not to act, but so you are not carrying it alone. You decide what to share and what to keep.

☐ **The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline, 800-422-4453**

Free, confidential, and open 24 hours a day, with counselors who can talk through the next step with a parent. You can also text GO to the same number or use the chat at [childhelpline.org](https://www.childhelpline.org).

☐ **Our confidential line**

Call, text, or use the confidential form. Tell us as much or as little as you want. Nothing happens until you say so.

THE ORDER THAT PROTECTS YOUR CHILD

Write it down. Make the report. Keep what exists. Then, and only then, the school, in writing. You can call us before any of these steps, and nothing happens until you say so.

General information, not legal advice for your situation. Contacting us does not create an attorney-client relationship, which is formed only by a signed written fee agreement. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911. To talk with a counselor now, the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline is 800-422-4453, free, confidential, and open 24 hours a day.

Free case review: (424) 235-7879. No fee unless we recover. If there is no recovery, you owe no fee and no case costs. Se habla español. The web version saves your progress: <https://www.wiseinjuryfirm.com/library/tools/after-your-child-tells-you-checklist/>

Written and reviewed by Josh Kohanim, Esq., California Bar No. 328609. Reviewed September 23, 2026. This website is for general information and is not legal advice. Contacting us does not create an attorney-client relationship, which is formed only by a signed written fee agreement. No attorney's fee unless we recover. If there is no recovery, you owe no fee and no case costs. The written fee agreement explains this before representation begins. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome.

Josh Kohanim, Esq., Wise Personal Injury & Accident Law, APC, 18653 Ventura Blvd., Suite 361, Tarzana, CA 91356. (424) 235-7879. Licensed by the State Bar of California, Bar No. 328609.