Arkansas
Child Abuse Reporting

Who do I contact to report an incident in Arkansas?
Contact the Child Abuse Hotline at the Department of Human Services.

Phone: 1-800-482-5964

How much time do I have to report an incident?
Arkansas requests immediate reporting of incidences of suspected child abuse. AR Code § 12-18-401 (2014)

What is "child abuse" in Arkansas?
Extreme or repeated cruelty to a child; Engaging in conduct creating a realistic and serious threat of death, permanent or temporary disfigurement, or impairment of any bodily organ; Injury to a child's intellectual, emotional, or psychological development as evidenced by observable and substantial impairment of the child's ability to function within the child's normal range of performance and behavior; Any injury that is at variance with the history given; Any nonaccidental physical injury; Any of the following intentional or knowing acts, with physical injury and without justifiable cause: Throwing, kicking, burning, biting, or cutting a child; Striking a child with a closed fist; Shaking a child; or Striking a child on the face or head; or Any of the following intentional or knowing acts, with or without physical injury: Striking a child six (6) years of age or younger on the face or head; Shaking a child three (3) years of age or younger; Interfering with a child's breathing; Pinching, biting, or striking a child in the genital area; Tying a child to a fixed or heavy object or binding or tying a child's limbs together; Giving a child or permitting a child to consume or inhale a poisonous or noxious substance not prescribed by a physician that has the capacity to interfere with normal physiological functions; Giving a child or permitting a child to consume or inhale a substance not prescribed by a physician that has the capacity to alter the mood of the child, including, but not limited to, the following: Marijuana; Alcohol, excluding alcohol given to a child during a recognized and established religious ceremony or service; A narcotic; or An over-the-counter drug if a person purposely administers an overdose to a child or purposely gives an inappropriate over-the-counter drug to a child and the child is detrimentally impacted by the overdose or the over-the-counter drug; Exposing a child to a chemical that has the capacity to interfere with normal physiological functions, including, but not limited to, a chemical used or generated during the manufacture of methamphetamine; or Subjecting a child to Munchausen syndrome by proxy or a factitious illness by proxy if the incident is confirmed by medical personnel; Recruiting, harboring, transporting, or obtaining a child for labor or services, through force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery; or Female genital mutilation.. AR Code § 12-18-103(3)(A) (2019)

Who is a mandatory reporter in Arkansas?
A child care worker or foster care worker**;** A coroner; A day care center worker; A dentist; A dental hygienist; A domestic abuse advocate; A domestic violence shelter employee; A domestic violence shelter volunteer; An employee of the Department of Human Services; An employee working under contract for, or a contractor of the Department of Human Services when acting within the scope of his or her contract or employment; A foster parent; A judge; A law enforcement official; A licensed nurse; Medical personnel who may be engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons; A mental health professional or

paraprofessional; An osteopath; A peace officer; A physician; A prosecuting attorney; A resident intern;A full-time or part-time employee of a public or private school, including without limitation a school counselor, A school official; a teacher; a coach or director of a public or private athletic organization, team or club; and a coach or director of a public or private nonathletic organization, team or club; A person who is at least 21 years of age and volunteers in a public or private school: as a coach or director of a public or private athletic organization, team, or club; or as a coach of a public or private nonathletic organization, team, or club; A person employed as a school official in an institution of higher education; A social worker; A surgeon; A teacher; A court-appointed special advocate program staff member or volunteer; A juvenile intake or probation officer; A clergy member, which includes a minister, priest, rabbi, accredited Christian Science practitioner, or other similar functionary of a religious organization, or an individual reasonably believed to be so by the person consulting him or her except to the extent the clergy member: Has acquired knowledge of suspected child maltreatment through communications required to be kept confidential pursuant to the religious discipline of the relevant denomination or faith; or Received the knowledge of the suspected child maltreatment from the alleged offender in the context of a statement of admission; An employee of a child advocacy center or a child safety center; An attorney ad litem in the course of his or her duties as an attorney ad litem; A sexual abuse advocate or sexual abuse volunteer who works with a victim of sexual abuse as an employee of a community-based victim service or mental health agency such as Safe Places, United Family Services, or Centers for Youth and Families; A sexual abuse advocate or sexual abuse volunteer includes a paid or volunteer sexual abuse advocate who is based with a local law enforcement agency; A rape crisis advocate or rape crisis volunteer; A child abuse advocate or child abuse volunteer who works with a child victim of abuse or maltreatment as an employee of a community-based victim service or a mental health agency such as Safe Places, United Family Services, or Centers for Youth and Families; A child abuse advocate or child abuse volunteer includes a paid or volunteer sexual abuse advocate who is based with a local law enforcement agency; A victim/witness coordinator; A victim assistance professional or victim assistance volunteer; An employee of the Crimes Against Children Division of the Department of Arkansas State Police; An employee of a reproductive healthcare facility; and A volunteer at a reproductive healthcare facility. AR Code §12-18-402(b)

Are Clergy mandatory reporters in Arkansas?
Yes. AR Code §12-18-402(b)(29)

Is there an exception for penitential communication in Arkansas?
Yes. Clergy are not required to report when he or she has "acquired knowledge of suspected child maltreatment through communications required to be kept confidential pursuant to the religious discipline of the relevant denomination or faith; or Received the knowledge of the suspected child maltreatment from the alleged offender in the context of a statement of admission AR Code §12-18-402(b)(29)

If there is a penitential communication in Arkansas, how do you define such a communication?
Arkansas defines penitential communication as that communication between a minister and a person confessing to or being counseled by the minister. AR Code §12-18-803(b)

Where can I find Arkansas law on child abuse?
http://law.justia.com/codes/arkansas/2014/title-12/subtitle-2/chapter-18/