

ONE CHILD

INTERNATIONAL

ONE CHILD INTERNATIONAL INC.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

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Press Release

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Introduction of Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse in Ireland

The introduction of Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse by child care professionals was recommended by the Irish Law Reform Commission Report on Child Sexual Abuse in 1990. Twenty -two years, and countless reports on child abuse later, nothing has been done by successive governments to implement mandatory reporting.

In January of 2012 One Child International began to fill that gap by issuing a simple 'Guide to Mandatory Reporting'* which states who, when and under what circumstances abuse should be reported and to whom. Copies were sent in February to all members of the Dail (Congress), the Senate, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Cabinet Ministers, all of the heads of the child advocacy NGOs in Dublin, Teacher trade union representatives, Archbishop Martin, and the media. Included was an invitation to request additional copies for distribution to colleagues and constituents free of charge.

In 1997 the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) wrote a document, 'Twelve Point Checklist' for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child* providing a number of recommendations for the improvement of the welfare of abused children. Included was a section on Mandatory Reporting (Point 8, Pages 18-19) which stated (excerpts): *'There is considerable evidence available to suggest that the reality of child abuse in Ireland, as in other countries, is hidden behind a wall of silence, secrecy and denial. Such secrecy and denial is not confined to victims and perpetrators, but is mirrored by societal denial.'*

'... Independent research carried out by IMS for ISPCC in November 1996 showed that 9 out of 10 members of the Irish public favored the introduction of Mandatory Reporting.'

'Under pressure from professionals working in the system the previous Government failed to take a position of political leadership and rejected Mandatory Reporting.'

That failure by government and professional pressure is still in place. It is held there by the same professionals who, it seems, fear that they will lose out financially, and have increased responsibility, and accountability, under the Mandatory Reporting law. Maintaining the status quo has been the preference for the past 22 years. These professionals will be obliged to face public scrutiny and consequences for the work that they do or fail to do well. Or as the ISPCC put it 14 years ago: *'The ISPCC continues to believe that the only effective catalyst for the improvement of our child protection response is the introduction of a form of Mandatory Reporting which places a legal obligation on designated professionals responsible for the care and protection of children, to report suspected or actual cases of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.'*

As you can see there is nothing new in the mandatory reporting of child abuse. After 22 years it will take an effort by people other than government and advocacy professionals to make the change. The launch of the guide by One Child is one step in the right direction. The next step is to get a copy into the hands of every parent in Ireland, which is One Child International's goal.

About us: One Child International is a child advocacy - child protection and abuse prevention - non-profit. Established in 2007, One Child's mission is 'the protection of children from abuse.' Our goal is to provide child abuse prevention information to as wide an audience as possible worldwide. Our rationale is that an informed parent and community equal a better protected child.

One Child International Inc., is not affiliated with any religious, political or cultural organization or institution; our only purpose is the protection of children from abuse. We have offices in Fort Lauderdale, Dublin and Sydney.

*** Links:**

Guide to Mandatory Reporting: <http://www.abusewatch.net/mandatory.pdf>
ISPCC 'Twelve Point Checklist' for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
http://www.abusewatch.net/Ireland_ISPCC_NGO_Report.pdf
Site: www.abusewatch.net