

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Monday, January 27, 2014

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## **Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice Partners with Illinois Department of Children & Family Services to Migrate Calls from Youth Centers to Child Abuse Hotline**

*Hotline provides callers with 24-7 access to a live person*

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) today announced a partnership that will allow youth committed to IDJJ, their families and staff at Youth Centers to safely report allegations of abuse to the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline. When calling to report abuse, youth in IDJJ custody will now be able to speak with a live person answering the Child Abuse Hotline, which is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls to this hotline – 800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873) – are confidential.

In response to the June, 2013 federal Bureau of Justice Statistics survey on sexual abuse allegations, IDJJ moved quickly to establish an interim, 24-7 telephone recording hotline for youth in its custody. The department made the service available immediately for youth to report any abuse, while exploring how to route calls to a staffed hotline that maintains confidentiality, youth safety and reporting integrity.

“Migrating calls to the DCFS hotline bolsters our efforts to protect the youth committed to IDJJ by providing 24-7 access to a live person to report any allegations of abuse,” the IDJJ Acting Director Era Lauder milk said. “The new process will also enable us to ensure appropriate, independent responses and swiftly address time-sensitive information.”

Youth committed to IDJJ and their parents or guardians have been provided information about the new process and the importance of reporting any type of sexual misconduct or abuse. Routing all reports of abuse through the DCFS Child Abuse Hotline will allow the state to respond to reports of child abuse - regardless of where the abuse occurs - immediately and in a consistent manner.

IDJJ has worked closely with DCFS, the Illinois State Police, and the Illinois Department of Corrections to maintain a seamless investigation and reporting process. IDJJ has also been working on compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act standards, has updated policies and procedures with regards to youth safety and continues to improve security controls to help reduce and prevent sexual victimization of youth in Illinois juvenile facilities.

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice ([www.idjj.illinois.gov](http://www.idjj.illinois.gov)) has zero tolerance for any type of sexual abuse, harassment or victimization, and is committed to providing safe, rehabilitative, and appropriately secure environments for youth. The department continues its mission of enhancing public safety and positive youth outcomes by providing strength-based, individualized services to youth in a safe learning and treatment environment, so that they may successfully reintegrate into their communities.

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