

## Determining the Credibility of the Report

The credibility of the information being reported is considered in determining whether the case referred is a valid complaint and should be accepted for an initial assessment/investigation. A number of questions will help caseworkers to evaluate the credibility of the report:

- Is the reporter willing to give his or her name, address, and telephone number?
- What is the reporter's relationship to the victim and family?
- How well does the reporter know the family?
- If the reporter knew of previous abuse or neglect, why is he or she reporting now?
- How does the reporter know about the case?
- Does the reporter stand to gain anything for reporting or from the report being validated?
- Has the reporter made previous unfounded reports on this family?
- Is the reporter willing to meet with a caseworker in person if needed?
- Does the reporter appear to be intoxicated, extremely bitter, angry, or exhibiting behavior that which would make the caseworker question his or her competency?
- Can or will the reporter refer the agency to others who know about the situation?
- What does the reporter hope will happen as a result of the report?
- Does the reporter fear reprisal from family?
- Does the reporter fear self-incrimination? For example, due to substance-abusing behavior or participation in physically abusive behavior.

Source: *Child Protective Services: A Guide for Caseworkers* by Diane DePanfilis and Marsha K. Salus