

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Protocol

Educators **should**:

- Be familiar with Indiana child abuse reporting laws.
- Follow school administration notification policies, **but** not at the expense of violating your responsibility as a mandated reporter.
- Report child abuse as soon as it is suspected.
- Expect an investigation of your report and notification that the case was or was not substantiated and expect anonymity.
- Receive immunity from prosecution if you reported in "good faith."

Educators **should not**:

- Contact the child's family or other persons (relatives, friends, alleged perpetrator) for the purpose of determining the cause of injury. This may allow the removal of evidence or coercion of the child to change their story before an investigation.
- Feel compelled to prove that a child has been abused or neglected. It is the responsibility of Child Protection Services and/or the Law Enforcement Agency to investigate and determine if the child has been abused or neglected.
- Remove clothing—especially if it covers "private parts," in order to see an injury.

Where do you report?

- Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556
This line is staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.

What information is needed? Be prepared to provide:

- Identifying information; name, address, phone number and date of birth of the child. Identity of the suspected perpetrator, if known. Names of parents or caretakers.
- Description of the injuries/physical indicators. Be as specific as possible regarding location, size and severity of physical injuries or conditions.
- Verbal reports made by the child, behavior of the child or any other evidence of problems that have been observed.

YOU are a mandated reporter per IC31-33-5.

- Indiana law says that any individual who has reason to believe that a child (before the child's 18th birthday) is a victim of abuse or neglect shall make a report to the Department of Child Services (DCS). Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a Class B misdemeanor.
- School personnel have an additional obligation to also immediately notify the building principal or building designee.
- Reporting the suspected allegations of child abuse or neglect to your supervisor, the principal, counselor, social worker, or the building designee **DOES NOT** fulfill your mandated requirement to report directly to the DCS.
- If there is a difference of opinion regarding whether or not a report should be made, you have "reason to

believe” that a child is a victim, and you are acting in “good faith,” you should make the report.

- You **are not** required to determine whether the abuse or neglect has actually occurred. Use common sense, and always err on the side of caution by filing a report when in doubt.
- Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556
This line is staffed 24 hours/day, 7 days/week.
- Be prepared to provide, if known, the following information:
 - ❖ Alleged victim’s full name, date of birth and other identifying information such as phone numbers, sex and siblings.
 - ❖ Child’s current address as well as past addresses, and the address where the alleged incident happened if different.
 - ❖ If known, alleged perpetrator’s full name and relationship to the child. Does the alleged perpetrator live with the child?
 - ❖ Names of parents or caretakers.
 - ❖ History of child’s behavior, patterns of attendance or other information that may be helpful to the investigation.
 - ❖ Description of the injury, and any other physical, verbal or behavioral indicators. Statements made by the child and the context of the disclosure. For example, was the child asked about the injury, or did they volunteer the information. Did the child’s story change?
- Make the oral report immediately to the DCS.

- Keep all information regarding the report confidential.
- Do not contact the child's family.
- **Physical Abuse** is non-accidental physical injury to the child. Examples of physical abuse include, kicking, punching, beating, and burning.
- **Neglect** is harm to a child's health or welfare due to the failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, supervision, or medical care.
- **Sexual Abuse** is engaging in sexual contact or allowing the child to be used for the sexual stimulation of others such as allowing the child to be depicted in a sexual act or prostitution.
- **Emotional Abuse / Maltreatment** would include treatment that involves cruelty or suffering that a reasonable person would recognize as excessive. Examples include locking a child in a closet, forcing the child to drink hot pepper sauce or eat dog food as a punishment, or chronic, extreme verbal abuse.