

## CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT RECONGITION & REPORTING PROCEDURES

\*Must be reviewed annually

- Report all suspected child abuse & neglect of any child to the 24 Hour Division of Family Services Child Abuse & Neglect Report Line at **1-800-292-9582**
- Child care providers are required by law to report suspected child abuse & neglect.
- You do not need anyone's permission to call the report line.
- According to Delaware Code, "Abuse" or "abused child" means that the person: causes or inflicts sexual abuse on a child; or has care, custody, or control of a child, and causes or inflicts:
  - Physical injury through unjustified force by throwing the child, kicking, burning, cutting, striking with a closed fist, interfering with breathing, use of or threatened use of a deadly weapon, prolonged deprivation of sustenance or medication, or doing any other act that is likely to cause or does cause physical injury, disfigurement, mental distress, unnecessary degradation or substantial risk of serious physical injury or death;
  - Emotional abuse;
  - Torture;
  - Exploitation; or
  - Maltreatment or mistreatment
- If a child tells you he/she is being abused or you suspect abuse by a parent or caretaker:
  - 1) DO NOT interview the child multiple times
  - 2) DO NOT take pictures of the injuries or ask the child to undress
  - 3) DO NOT notify the parent/caretaker you are making a report
  - 4) DO ask minimal fact questions, such as:
    - What happened?
    - When did that happen?
    - Where did that happen?
    - Did you tell anyone what happened?
  - 5) Write down the child's exact words if you must speak to the child
  - 6) Avoid expressing disbelief, shock or anger, etc.
  - 7) Avoid value judgments and accusatory statements
  - 8) Thank the child for telling and tell the child it is not his/her fault
  - 9) Tell the child you have to report the abuse to a professional
  - 10) Make a report to the Child Abuse & Neglect Report Line
- The person who spoke to the child or observed the child should make the report because it is required by statute & the Report Line may have questions about the child's disclosure or condition.
- You are not an investigator. You are not trained to identify clues, gather statements, or investigate how an injury occurred. However, you should collect as much information as possible if you suspect child abuse or neglect. Your information needs to be reliable, consistent, and specific.
- Document your concerns. Document the child's behavior. Note any bruises or marks and the explanations given to you by the child or adult.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Review

## Physical Abuse

### **Physical Indicators:**

- Human bite marks
- Bald spots
- Unexplained burns on arms, legs, neck or torso
- Unexplained fractures
- Unexplained bruising, lacerations or abrasions

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Reports injury by caregiver
- Shrinks at approach of adults
- Complains of soreness & moves awkwardly
- Inability to use an arm, inability to bear weight
- Cannot tolerate physical contact or touch
- Wears clothing that covers body when not appropriate
- Seems frightened of the caregiver and protests or cries when it is time to go home

### **Parent/Caretaker Indicators:**

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
- Has a history of abuse as a child

## Neglect

### **Physical Indicators:**

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress
- Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or long periods
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Distended stomach, emaciated

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Is begging or stealing food
- Has consistent fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep
- States there is no caretaker at home
- Has frequent school absences or tardiness
- Lacks needed medical or dental care
- Abuses alcohol or drugs
- Early emancipation from family

### **Parent/Caretaker Indicators:**

- Appears to be indifferent to the child
- Seems apathetic or depressed
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

## Sexual Abuse

### **Physical Indicators:**

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody clothing
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitals, vaginal or anal areas
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Frequent unexplained sore throat
- Pregnancies
- Sexually transmitted infections

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- (Younger) Exhibits extremely sexualized behavior/language that is significantly different from same-aged peers
- (Older) Exhibits sexual behavior involving coercion/manipulation of another child
- Bedwetting/soiling
- Runs away, attempts suicide
- Fear of a specific individual
- Refusal to be left alone
- Significant change in behavior/mood/appetite
- Drop in school performance/attendance

### **Parent/Caretaker Indicators:**

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- Is secretive and isolated
- Is jealous or controlling with family members

## Emotional Maltreatment

### **Physical Indicators:**

- Lags in physical or emotional development (e.g., walking, talking, non-organic failure to thrive)

### **Behavioral Indicators:**

- Ongoing sleep/appetite disturbance
- Persistent bedwetting/soiling
- Frequent disruptive or aggressive behaviors
- Reports lack of attachment to parent
- Severe withdrawal (e.g., never responding to cuddling, never smiling or making sounds)
- Social isolation
- Starting fires or cruelty to animals
- Fearfulness and clinginess
- Chronic head banging
- Inappropriately adult

### **Parent/Caretaker Indicators:**

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers for help for the child's problems
- Overtly rejects the child