

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedure

CHILD ABUSE and NEGLECT (CAN) PROCEDURE

1. Initial Concern

Staff member suspects abuse or neglect based on observation or communication. You ask appropriate questions like, “Tell me what happened,” or “That looks sore, what happened?” Keep it brief and do not ask leading questions. If you get in a situation and don’t know what to say, ask for help.

2. Confer

Staff must confer with their direct supervisor if available. If the supervisor is not available then the chain for reporting is as follows: Education or EHS Program Manager, Family Service Program Manager, Health Program Manager, or the Director of Early Learning regarding potential CAN and to determine the next step. Confer in the order listed. As mandated reporters, we are required by Washington State Law to report all suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect within 48 hours. Our program requires contact with CPS within **24 hours**. It is staff’s responsibility to report the suspected abuse to CPS regardless of reports initiated by others, including parents and other agencies. Staff need not verify that a child has in fact been abused or neglected. Any conditions or information that may reasonably be related to abuse or neglect should be reported. Legal authorities have the responsibility for investigating each case and taking such action as is appropriate under the circumstances.

3. Report

Staff member must report suspected injuries, actions or statements to their direct supervisor or following the chain of command listed above before making a call to CPS, whenever possible. If the supervisor or others are not available, staff member should contact an Administrative Assistant for assistance in locating necessary staff, as soon as possible for potential CPS report. Afterwards, staff member will inform their supervisor when they become available. If unable to reach the supervisor or other staff, the staff member is still required to call CPS and complete documentation and follow up with their supervisor at a later time.

When reporting the following steps must be taken:

- a) Make a CPS report with family name and other specific information (see #4 below).
- b) Consult with CPS to determine if a report is necessary without giving names, address, etc. Have this information ready in case the CPS worker determines that it is appropriate to make a full report. Document the consultation, including the Intake Worker’s name.
- c) Provide CPS with specific information as requested. This includes family member names, ages, others currently in the home, etc.
- d) If appropriate, encourage the family to self-report and follow up by making a report to CPS.

If after consultation with the supervisor, staff continues to have doubts regarding suspected abuse/neglect, they are legally obligated to make a report to CPS, follow up with necessary paperwork, and inform the supervisor.

4. Documentation

Call CPS within 24 Hours

Before you call, have the documentation and child's file available. When you call, document the name of the intake reporter you speak with. Answer all their questions. Follow up by completing the appropriate CAN form. No Head Start/ECEAP staff will draw pictures or take photos of children or their suspected injuries when reporting to CPS or documenting CPS concerns. Staff will not do additional investigative questioning. For example, after making a report to CPS, staff will not go back to the child and ask additional questions. If CPS worker requests additional questioning, the direct supervisor and Program Manager/Director, must be informed and provide approval.

5. Determine Possible Parental Notification

Plan with CPS, your direct supervisor and Program Manager whether or not the parent/guardian will be told; then determine with those same individuals who will discuss the situation with the family. If staff disagrees about informing parents, the Director will be consulted. The Director will review information and may discuss decision further with CPS. The Director or his/her designee will inform staff of final decision. Notify CPS Intake Worker if report has been shared with parent/s.

Staff Training

Within six months of their hire, each staff person will receive training about child abuse and neglect (Identification, reporting, documentation, intervention and follow-up procedures) and will participate in an annual review of that training.

Staff should refer to CPS in these additional instances:

- Domestic Violence: CPS should be called any time a child speaks about witnessing violence in the home or about being present in the home during violent acts. If the child indicates the Police were at the home, discuss the situation with your Supervisor prior to making a report.
- Sexual Acting Out: Any time a child displays sexualized behavior, a referral should be made to CPS consult with your Supervisor regarding behaviors that are concerning but may be age appropriate.
- Chemical Impairment: Any time a parent/Guardian obviously under the influence of alcohol or other drugs attempts to transport a child from class, note the car's make and license plate number and call 911 immediately. Following this call, make a referral to CPS and alert your Supervisor.

*Substitutes are considered designated reporters though it is asked they discuss reportable incidents with the site supervisor before calling CPS. If the site supervisor is not available, substitutes should consult with the program manager overseeing substitutes or the Assistant Director at the OESD prior to making a referral.