

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Procedure

Reporting Phone Number: 866.363.4276

Purpose

This document explains required training and guidelines for reporting child abuse and neglect. All staff funded by Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP dollars must report to Child Protective Services (CPS) if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has endured abuse or neglect.

If a subcontractor does not have a child abuse and neglect policy and procedure, follow the OESD Early Learning Child Abuse and Neglect Policy and procedure, which comply with current state laws and regulations (RCW 26.44.020). Parent/guardian must be informed of the policy at enrollment or orientation. Staff will follow OESD Board procedures for mandating reporting.

Reporting Guidelines

- Preserve confidentiality in accordance with state law and the Standard of Conduct: Confidentiality Policy. There is no need for a release of information to speak with CPS or police.
- Do not independently intervene or investigate cases of suspected abuse or neglect like interviewing children or asking leading questions. Staff must cooperate fully with CPS and police.
- No Early Learning staff will draw pictures or take photos of children or their suspected injuries when reporting to CPS or documenting CPS concerns.
- Make the report at the first opportunity, a report must be made within 24 hours. When a report is made, document using the Child Abuse Report. Refer to Documentation Protocols as needed.
- Staff should connect with supervisor prior to making the report if available. If supervisor is unavailable, contact any program manager to let them know you are reporting and for support. Regardless of availability of supervisor, reports to CPS must still be made within 24 hours.

Documentation guidelines:

- Use quotation marks and document conversations verbatim as much as possible.
- Make objective statements.
- Report observations, not assumptions.
- Inform your supervisor immediately.
- Give the Child Abuse Report to your Supervisor for review after the report has been made.
- The staff making the report will put an event in the Communication Log with the description labeled "CPS Report" and include who they spoke to and next steps (if known).
- Supervisor will ensure it is complete and place it in the Records Folder in the manager's office. No copy of this form will remain in any location except the Records Folder.

Possible Parental Notification

Plan with your direct supervisor (and program manager if available) whether the parent/guardian will be informed; 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. The Director or his/her designee will inform staff of final decision.