

Preventing and ending child abuse is everyone's responsibility and is crucial to building a safe, healthy, and strong community.

CONTACT US:

2121 South State St.
Suite 202
Salt Lake City, UT 84115
801.532.3404

2955 Harrison Blvd.
Suite 104
Ogden, UT 84403
801.393.3366

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT US AT:**

PCAUtah.org



Child Abuse Prevention Training Handbook



**EDUCATE
ENGAGE
EMPOWER**



NEED FOR PREVENTION EDUCATION

According to the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, the long term effects of abuse can include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Alcoholism and alcohol abuse | • Liver disease |
| • Poor health-related quality of life | • Risk for intimate partner violence |
| • Depression | • Multiple sexual partners |
| • Illicit drug use | • Sexually transmitted diseases |
| • Suicide attempts | • Early initiation of sexual activity |
| • Early initiation of smoking | • Adolescent pregnancy |

When children receive help and support, their chances of experiencing these negative effects decrease.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Physical: Anything that leaves a mark.

Emotional: Ongoing pattern of behavior that negatively affects the way a child feels or thinks about themselves.

Neglect: When a child is not receiving basic needs including: food, water, medical care, shelter, clothes, education, hygiene, love and care.

Sexual: Touching and Non-Touching

Touching: Someone touching a child on the private parts of their body for no reason.

Appropriate reasons include:

- Diaper changes
- Potty training or bathing
- Doctors' visits or applying medication

Non-Touching: Discussing things of a sexual nature with a child, taking inappropriate pictures of a child, exposing a child to explicit materials. Non-touching sexual abuse can occur both in person and through technology.

Notes:

- **Sense of Belonging**
The child will often lack confidence and pull away from a group. Help him/her become part of the group. Praise and encourage group involvement.
- **Approval**
The child needs the security of approval. Look for opportunities to exhibit this by smiling, encouraging, praising, and recognizing him/her.
- **Help in Expressing Feelings**
The child will often try to suppress feelings and will hold the hurt inside. As your relationship with the child strengthens, encourage him/her to talk about their feelings.
- **Provide a Positive Role Model**
The child may have a hard time distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. By being a good role model you can help provide patterns of appropriate behavior.
- **Reassurance**
The child may lack confidence in their abilities. Reassure the child that you are there and willing to help by acting as a “sounding board” when they want to talk.

Centralized Intake Number for Child
Protective Services

1-855-323-3237

Police – 911

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

What should educators look for? One sign may not necessarily indicate a child is being abused or neglected. However, if a number of signs are present, an educator should consider a possible case of child abuse.

Abuse or Neglect may be occurring if the child:

- Is habitually away from school and/or consistently late
- Is wary of physical contact
- Is destructive to self and/or others
- Has a sudden change in personality or school performance
- Experiences sleep disturbances
- Has knowledge of sexual acts beyond their years
- Is withdrawn, passive, and uncommunicative
- Is nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive, or destructive
- Alludes to inappropriate touching or to someone doing something that makes them feel uncomfortable or scared
- Poor self-esteem, difficulty expressing feelings, or problems forming relationships
- Is inadequately dressed for inclement weather or wears a long-sleeved shirt during summer months to cover bruises on the arms
- Is consistently hungry, tired, dirty or lacks adequate supervision
- Has an unexplained injury
- Has medical needs that are not addressed

Abuse or Neglect may be occurring if the caretaker:

- Shows little concern for his/her child’s problems
- Gives different explanations for the same injury
- Does not respond to the teacher’s inquiries
- Takes an unusual amount of time to seek health care for the child
- Is using alcohol and drugs inappropriately
- Lacks a support system to turn to in crisis
- Responds inappropriately to the seriousness of the problem
- Uses extreme forms of discipline
- Shows signs of loss of control or a fear of losing control
- Is unusually antagonistic and hostile when talking about the child’s problems

RISK FACTORS FOR ABUSE

There are some factors that may make a child more likely to be victimized, specifically concerning sexual abuse. A child who is insecure, lonely or has low self-esteem may thrive on the attention a perpetrator is showing to them. A child who lacks age appropriate information about sex or sexuality may be curious to learn more from a perpetrator, or believe lies the perpetrator tells them. Children who are exposed to sexually explicit television, video games, and music can become desensitized to sexual content, and a child with unsupervised access to technology is much more likely to encounter inappropriate content or an online predator than a child whose access is monitored or limited. However, any child could be abused regardless of evidence of any risk factors.

PERPETRATORS

There is a common misconception that all perpetrators fall into certain stereotypes when in fact perpetrators can be anyone. Perpetrators are both men and women; they look and act like everyday people. Some perpetrators strive to be charming, charismatic, and well-liked. Most often perpetrators are people the child knows and trusts. Abuse can happen anywhere a child is alone with the perpetrator, both physically and virtually.

APPROPRIATE ADULT BEHAVIORS

Educators should also familiarize themselves with their school policy on ethical standards while working with children. These are in place to not only protect the student, but also the educator.

Certain behaviors are more appropriate for the student/teacher relationship. Examples include giving high fives rather than hugs, keeping windows clear of coverings, and avoiding isolated interaction with a child, and respecting professional boundaries rather than being friends with students on social media.

A safe environment for children is created when all adults follow appropriate behaviors.

What do I do if I feel the case was handled incorrectly? Sometimes it is difficult to know what is happening behind the scenes. Legal restrictions prohibit the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) from disclosing details of an investigation. Children may be interviewed somewhere other than the school, leaving you unaware the interview has taken place. You can call CPS and ask the status of a case and they can let you know if it is open or closed, but cannot provide more details besides that. If you feel a case has been handled incorrectly you can ask to speak to the supervisor of the caseworker. It is best to remember that laws must be followed in all aspects of the investigation. Caseworkers want what is best for your students just like you do.

HOW CAN AN EDUCATOR SUPPORT THE CHILD AFTER A REPORT IS MADE?

Children need reassurance that they are worthwhile and have done nothing wrong. It is important for educators to provide the following for a child who has disclosed abuse or neglect:

- **Security**
The child needs to know that he/she can *trust* you and that his/her disclosure will not be made public. The child needs to know that you will remain supportive.
- **Structure**
The child needs routine. This provides for a sense of security and may be the only structure provided in his/her life. After the child is more confident, he/she will need less direction and support from you.
- **Consistency and Predictability**
The child needs to know that you have expectations of him/her and what these expectations are in advance. Be *consistent* in your relationship.
- **Identity**
A child who has been abused will usually suffer from poor self-image. Share positive feedback and praise with the child to help develop a positive self-image.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

When do I report suspected abuse? You should report suspected abuse as soon as possible after the disclosure. During recess, lunch, or your prep time are better choices rather than waiting until the end of the day. You may want to write down some of the comments from the disclosure so when you make the call you have the most accurate information. The earlier the report is made allows more time for Child Protective Services (CPS) to potentially interview the child at the school before they go home, especially if the perpetrator is a caretaker.

Can I just report the abuse to my principal and let the school take care of it?

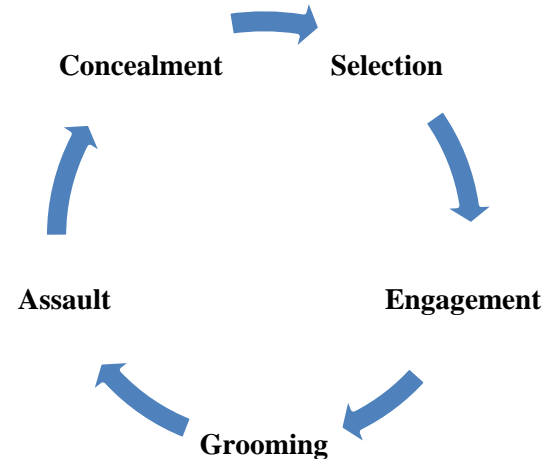
No, if you suspect abuse, or a child discloses to you, YOU must be the one on the phone reporting the information to CPS or law enforcement. It is good to let your principal know if you are making a call to CPS so they are not surprised if a caseworker comes to the school. The more information is repeated and passed on, the more likely it is that some of the information will be miscommunicated. CPS may not be able to take action if the report is coming from a third party and not directly from the person who received the disclosure.

What information should I have ready when I make a referral? When making a referral you need three pieces of information: the child's name, where they can be located, and an allegation of abuse. The more information you can give to CPS the better it is for the case. Include information such as the parents' names and contact information (even if they are not the alleged perpetrator) and siblings' names and grades in schools (even if they do not attend your school). Much of the information CPS requests will be in the child's school file. You are allowed to share the student's personal information from the file when making a child abuse report.

What should I do if I gather more information about a student after my initial report? Call and re-report. Every time you have a new piece of information, or see a new bruise or a change in behavior, call and pass that information on to CPS. CPS has specific requirements that have to be fulfilled when receiving an intake phone call in order to open a case. Sometimes one phone call of suspected abuse isn't enough to open a case; however every call is documented. It is possible that multiple people are calling with concerns of abuse. Each call provides more information and builds the strength of the referrals so that a case can be opened. Teachers are with children for so many periods of the day they are likely to be aware of possible abuse much sooner than a caseworker.

THE GROOMING CYCLE

Grooming is a process most commonly associated with child sexual abuse. Perpetrators use a grooming process to help the child feel comfortable with them and normalize the abuse. Grooming differs for each situation. Unfortunately, people who abuse children know what they are doing and are often able to get through the grooming cycle undetected.



Selection

Perpetrators select specific children to target. They may make their selection based on preferential factors such as the child's age or gender, or situational factors that allow easy access to their own child or the child of a relative.

Engagement

The perpetrator creates a relationship or friendship with the parent and the selected child.

Grooming

The perpetrator tests boundaries with the selected child. This can include back rubs, inappropriate jokes, sharing sexual material, inappropriate touching, and breaking rules. This is a tactic used to make the child blame themselves and feel they played a part in the abuse. Perpetrators will watch to see how the child reacts. If the child is passive and complies, the perpetrator will continue. If the child refuses, the grooming cycle may stop there.

Let your students know that even if they have made a mistake you are always going to care about them and you will support them.

Assault

The assault can be confusing for a child. They may not understand what has happened. They may also be confused by the fact that the assault does not always hurt and can sometimes feel good to the child. Some children may willingly participate in the assault because of previous grooming steps.

Concealment

Concealment is the stage where the perpetrator does all they can to ensure the child does not tell. They may blame and confuse the child, make the child feel responsible for the assault, remind them of their willingness to break certain rules, threaten and intimidate the child, and make them feel no one will believe them.

TYPES OF DISCLOSURES

Generally, when children disclose abuse they do not use direct and specific statements. They are often worried about how the disclosure will be received. They may think that they will not be believed or that they will get in trouble for disclosing. For these reasons, children may use more subtle ways of bringing up the abuse.

Indirect Hints

An indirect hint is when a child eludes to something inappropriate. Examples include: “Mommy was scary last night”, “Our neighbor wears funny underwear”, and “My babysitter keeps bothering me”. These vague comments wouldn’t necessarily indicate that abuse has occurred; however, by asking an open ended question you can gather more information to make an assessment. A simple response such as “Tell me more about that”, lets the child know you are willing to listen while allowing them to provide you with clarifying information. Do not lead the child or put words in his/her mouth. Bear in mind that you do not need to know the specifics of what happened in order to report suspected abuse.

Disguised Disclosure

“I know someone who is being touched in a bad way”. “What would happen if a girl told her mom that her dad hurt her and the mom didn’t believe her?”

Statements like these indicate the child may be talking about a friend or sibling, but it is just as likely that they are talking about themselves. Encourage the child to tell you what they know about the “other child”. It is probable that the child will eventually tell you who they are talking about.

Disclosure with Strings Attached

“I have a problem but if I tell you about it you have to promise not to tell anyone else.” Most children are aware that some negative consequences will result if they reveal the abuse. Often the offender uses the threat of these consequences to force the child to remain silent. You should not make promises. This will ensure that you do not make a promise that you are unable to keep. If you suspect abuse, tell the child that you care about them and want them to be safe.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES

How you respond to a child when they disclose is very important. It is important because you should **ALWAYS** believe a child when they are talking about abuse. Children need to be told that the abuse is not their fault and that they did the right thing by telling you. Often perpetrators will threaten the child and make them feel responsible or afraid to tell.

When responding to disclosures:

- Find a quiet place to talk with the child, but always avoid being alone behind closed doors.
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling you the truth.
- Use vocabulary that is on the same level as the child’s.
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell.
- Reassure the child that it is not his/her fault, that he/she is not bad.
- Determine the child’s immediate need for safety.
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support him/her.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Be honest and realistic with the child.