
Understanding Child Abuse: A Training for Child Care Workers

Storyland Preschool & Child Care Center

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Three Credit Hours

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OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate an understanding of the magnitude of the problem
- Define abuse,
- List the types of abuse : Physical, Sexual, Mental (Emotional)
- Define neglect
- List symptoms of each type of child abuse
- Describe personal characteristics of people who abuse children
- Explain what your legal responsibility is if you suspect abuse
- Explain how to report child abuse
- List some of the consequences of child abuse
- Explain some techniques to help children talk about abuse
- Describe some strategies to help abused children in the classroom

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I can define the terms abuse, physical, sexual and mental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am familiar with the incidence of the different types of abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I can list many of the symptoms of neglect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I am familiar with the reporting responsibilities of a child care worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I know many of the factors that place a particular child at risk for child abuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I can describe some of the characteristics of people who mistreat children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I can list some of the consequences of child abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I know the symptoms of child sexual abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Many of us have some preconceived notions in our head regarding child abuse. What do you think?

TAKE THIS QUIZ:

Answers will be revealed at the end of this unit:

1. Children are usually abused by stranger. True or False

2. Parental love is innate or genetically determined. True or False
3. More abuse occurs in poverty stricken homes. True or False
4. Most abused children have behavioral problems that cause the abuse. True or False
5. Most child abuse happens accidentally. True or False
6. Bonding occurs between parent and infant immediately after birth True or False
7. If you answered false to all of the above statements, you are correct.

DEFINING ABUSE

Every jurisdiction has its own definition of child abuse and even within jurisdictions; definitions can vary depending upon the setting that abuse has occurred. In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) has offered the following definition for child maltreatment:

“Any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that result in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.”

This broad definition goes well beyond the obvious. It means that child abuse is more than bruises or broken bones even though this type of injury inflicted upon a child is difficult to comprehend. Abuse is also about ignoring children’s needs, putting them in dangerous situations and making them feel worthless, stupid or unloved. These are all abuse and regardless of the type of abuse the results can be severe, if not life threatening. Child maltreatment can have life time consequences. Abuse causes stress that can disrupt early brain development. Extreme stress can harm the development of the nervous and immune systems. As a result, children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for health problems as adults. These problems include alcoholism, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders, obesity, high-risk sexual behaviors, smoking, suicide, and certain chronic diseases.

Abuse can happen in a child’s home or in a community setting such as a school, child care facility, extracurricular activity or any place where a child might be.

As odd as it might seem, it was not until the 19th century that children were given the same legal status as domesticated animals with regard to the cruelty prevention.

What is the Definition of Abuse for Child Care Workers in Texas

As professional child care workers, we are held to a higher standard and the definition is different from that used with others not in the field.

TYPES OF ABUSE

There are four basic categories of abuse recognized including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. According to a US study done in 2005, approximately 63% of cases were defined as neglect, 16% were physical abuse, 10% were sexual abuse and 7% were emotional abuse.

NEGLECT

Neglect is defined as the failure to provide for the shelter, safety, supervision, and nutritional needs of children. It can further be classified as physical, emotional or educational. Neglect is not clear cut, however and making an assessment or determination of neglect requires one to look at cultural values, the standards of care in the community, and socioeconomic status. Anything that could endanger a child's health or welfare could be considered neglect. This might include failure to provide food, clothing, or shelter, lack of medical or dental care, education or a lack of supervision. It would also mean the failure to protect a child from abuse.

Neglect Citation: Fam. Code § 261.001

Neglect means the following acts or omissions by a person:

- Placing a child in, or failing to remove a child from, a situation that a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child
- Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child, with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury, or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of the child
- Failing to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services had been offered and refused
- Placing a child in, or failing to remove the child from, a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct harmful to the child
- Placing a child in, or failing to remove the child from, a situation in which the child would be exposed to acts or omissions that constitute sexual abuse
- The failure by the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to permit the child to return to the child's home without arranging for the necessary care for the child after the child has been absent from the home for any reason, including having been in residential placement or having run away

Parents of Neglected Children

A child at risk for neglect may have parents who are highly stressed, seem to have little interest in the child, or seem to ignore the child's needs. They may have habits or problems such as substance abuse that prevents them from doing what they need to do or they simply refuse to provide the care and attention that a child needs. Poverty and homelessness is often associated with neglect although being poor does not automatically mean the child is neglected.

Indicators of Neglect

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is any act that results in a physical injury to a child that was not accidental. Physical abuse involves intentional, deliberate assaults to a child such as punching, kicking, choking, burning, cutting, twisting of limbs, hitting with a hand, stick, belt or other object, biting, poking, shaking or excessive corporal punishment inflicted on a child by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child. If spanking causes physical harm to the child, then it may be considered excessive. Shaken baby syndrome is a form of child physical abuse.

In Texas, the law is found in the Family Code.

Physical Abuse Citation: Fam. Code § 261.001

Abuse means the following acts or omissions by a person:

- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm
- Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury or substantial harm to the child

- The current use by a person of a controlled substance in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child
- Causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance

Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physical injuries that are the result of child abuse can be mild to severe and could include bruises, burns, and lacerations, head injuries, broken bones, broken teeth, and damage to internal organs. The injuries can result in pain to the child, swelling, bleeding (internal as well as external), decreased ability to move around, delayed development, malnutrition, convulsions, coma, or even death. These same injuries can be the result of accidents or other medical problems. Trained professionals use certain measures to differentiate between actual abuse and accidents. They look at the context and circumstances surrounding the injury, and the actual nature of the wounds.

- Injuries that cannot be explained properly might lead a professional to suspect child abuse.
- Wounds that seem are unusual for the age of the child. Bumps and bruises on school age children are quite normal, but a bruise found on a newborn is highly suspect.
- Wounds that are in unusual places or are unusually shaped are suspect. Many abuse wounds occur on the face and back. If there appears to be a handprint on the child, it is likely abuse.
- The frequency of wounds also suggests abuse. For example, an old injury shows up when a child is X-rayed for a new injury. Bruises are also examined to determine how long they have been present. A wound starts out as red and turns blue after about 6 hours or so, then black or purple after about 12 to 24 hours. After a few days, the bruise turns greenish fading to yellow or brown after about a week. Children who have many bruises in various stages of healing are suspected of being a victim of child abuse.
- Wounds that form distinctive shapes, such as the teeth marks of an adult or the belt buckle are likely to be abuse. Marks around a child's wrist may mean that the child was tied up.
- Remember, there are some marks found on children that are not caused by abuse. Mongolian spots for example often appear as bruises on the back side of babies and toddlers. These are common in Asian babies and usually fade over time. They are not abuse.

Check List of Physical Abuse Symptoms

- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or a human bite
- Cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Injuries that appear after child has been gone
- Wearing inappropriate clothing to cover physical indicators

- Inappropriate, excessive fear of parent or caregiver
- Unbelievable, inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Unusual shyness and wariness of physical contact
- Extremes of behavior—withdrawal, aggression, regression, depression
- Infant lies unusually still while surveying surroundings
- Fear of going home or seeing parents

SEXUAL ABUSE

This type of abuse can include activities by a parent or caregiver such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Citation: Fam. Code § 261.001

The term abuse includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

- Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of indecency with a child, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault
- Failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child
- Compelling or encouraging a child to engage in sexual conduct
- Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of a child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene or pornographic
- Causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a child

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

According to the American Human Society, children who are sexually abused may exhibit behavioral changes, based on their age.

Children up to age 3 may exhibit:

- Fear or excessive crying
- Vomiting
- Feeding problems
- Bowel problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Failure to thrive

Children ages 2 to 9 may exhibit:

- Fear of particular people, places or activities
- Regression to earlier behaviors such as bed wetting or stranger anxiety
- Victimization of others
- Excessive masturbation
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Fear of attack recurring
- Eating disturbances

Symptoms of sexual abuse in older children and adolescents include:

- Depression
- Nightmares or sleep disturbances
- Poor school performance
- Promiscuity
- Substance abuse
- Aggression
- Running away from home
- Fear of attack recurring
- Eating disturbances
- Early pregnancy or marriage
- Suicidal gestures
- Anger about being forced into situation beyond one's control
- Pseudo-mature behaviors

According to the American Human Society, The effects of sexual abuse extend far beyond childhood. Sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and creates a loss of trust, feelings of guilt and self-abusive behavior. It can lead to antisocial behavior, depression, identity confusion, loss of self-esteem and other serious emotional problems. It can also lead to difficulty with intimate relationships later in life. The sexual victimization of children is ethically and morally wrong.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE (ALSO CALLED PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE)

This involves a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-esteem. This may include a constant barrage of criticism, threats, and rejections by a parent or caregiver. It also includes the withholding of love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is almost always present with other forms of abuse. Emotional Abuse is the hardest form of abuse to identify because there are no outward signs such as found with physical abuse. Emotional abuse of a child is commonly defined as a pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development. Emotional abuse of a child can include:

Types of Emotional Abuse

- **Ignoring.** Either physically or psychologically, the parent or caregiver is not present to respond to the child. He or she may not look at the child and may not call the child by name.
- **Rejecting.** This is an active refusal to respond to a child's needs (e.g., refusing to touch a child, denying the needs of a child, ridiculing a child).
- **Isolating.** The parent or caregiver consistently prevents the child from having normal social interactions with peers, family members and adults. This also may include confining the child or limiting the child's freedom of movement.
- **Exploiting or corrupting.** In this kind of abuse, a child is taught, encouraged or forced to develop inappropriate or illegal behaviors. It may involve self-destructive or antisocial acts of the parent or caregiver, such as teaching a child how to steal or forcing a child into prostitution.
- **Verbally assaulting.** This involves constantly belittling, shaming, ridiculing or verbally threatening the child.
- **Terrorizing.** Here, the parent or caregiver threatens or bullies the child and creates a climate of fear for the child. Terrorizing can include placing the child or the child's loved one (such as a sibling, pet or toy) in a dangerous or chaotic situation, or placing rigid or unrealistic expectations on the child with threats of harm if they are not met.
- **Neglecting the child.** This abuse may include educational neglect, where a parent or caregiver fails or refuses to provide the child with necessary educational services; mental health neglect, where the parent or caregiver denies or ignores a child's need for treatment for psychological problems; or medical neglect, where a parent or caregiver denies or ignores a child's need for treatment for medical problems. American Humane Society 2011.
<http://www.americanhumane.org/about-us/newsroom/fact-sheets/emotional-abuse.html>

Emotional Abuse Citation: Fam. Code § 261.001

The term abuse includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

- Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning
- Causing or permitting a child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that • results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Child Abuse American has identified the following behaviors as being associated with emotional abuse, but can also occur in normal children and in children with other disorders

- inappropriate behavior that is immature or more mature for the child's age
- dramatic behavioral changes

- clinging or compulsively seeking affection and attention
- aggressiveness
- uncooperativeness
- bedwetting or loss of bowel control (after a child has been trained)
- destructive or antisocial behavior (being constantly withdrawn and sad)
- Poor relationships with peers
- lack of self confidence
- unusual fears for the child's age (fear of going home, being left alone, specific objects)
- inability to react with emotion or develop an emotional bond with others

RESULTS OF CHILD ABUSE

Regardless of what type of abuse that happens, all have three things in common:

1. A child is harmed
2. The action was intentional (not accidental)
3. The abuser was a person responsible for the child

WHO ABUSE CHILDREN?

The majority of perpetrators of child abuse are parent (77%) and another 11% are relatives of the victim. About 10% of abuses are classified as non-caregivers or unknown. The remaining 2% are in other caregiving relationships such as child care providers, foster parents, and other facility staff.

81% of abusers are under 40 years old

61% are women although the gender differs by type of abuse

Factors that put a person at risk for abusing a child

1. The person was abused in childhood. Approximately 20% of offenders were abused as a child.
2. Substance Abuse
3. Family Stress

ABUSE STATISTICS

According to Child Maltreatment 2010

- 3.3 million referrals involving alleged maltreatment of 5.9 million children were received by CPS agencies
- 90.3 percent of referrals were investigated
- 436,321 of investigations were substantiated
- A report of child abuse is made every ten seconds.
- Almost five children die every day as a result of child abuse. More than three out of four are under the age of 4.
- It is estimated that between 60-85% of child fatalities due to maltreatment are not recorded as such on death certificates.
- 90% of child sexual abuse victims know the perpetrator in some way; 68% are abused by family members.
- Child abuse occurs at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.
- 31% percent of women in prison in the United States were abused as children.
- Over 60% of people in drug rehabilitation centers report being abused or neglected as a child.
- About 30% of abused and neglected children will later abuse their own children, continuing the horrible cycle of abuse.
- About 80% of 21 year olds that were abused as children met criteria for at least one psychological disorder.
- The estimated annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States for 2007 is \$104 billion.
- Abused children are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy.
- Abused teens are 3 times less likely to practice safe sex, putting them at greater risk for STDs.

THE COST TO SOCIETY

Children who have been abused face an uncertain future in terms of their health and emotional wellbeing. The cost to society is tremendous and child maltreatment is considered to be a substantial public health problem according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The financial costs for victims and society are substantial. A recent CDC study, The Economic Burden of Child Maltreatment

in the United States and Implications for Prevention, found the total lifetime estimated financial costs associated with just one year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and neglect) is approximately \$124 billion. Broken down on an individual level, this study estimated that the average lifetime cost per victim of nonfatal child maltreatment is \$210,012 in 2010 dollars. This amount can be further divided into:

\$32,648 in childhood health care costs;

\$10,530 in adult medical costs;

\$144,360 in productivity losses;

\$7,728 in child welfare costs;

\$6,747 in criminal justice costs;

\$7,999 in special education costs.

RISK FACTORS

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there appears to be some factors that if present can increase the risk of abuse.

- **Age.** Children under 4 years of age are at greatest risk for severe injury and death from abuse.
- **Family environment.** Abuse and neglect can occur in families where there is a great deal of stress. The stress can result from a family history of violence, drug or alcohol abuse, poverty, and chronic health problems. Families that do not have nearby friends, relatives, and other social support are also at risk.
- **Community.** On-going violence in the community may create an environment where child abuse is accepted.
- **A special Child** may be targeted in a family for abuse. The child may have behavioral problems, attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity, handicap or simply unplanned and unwanted.

REASONS CHILDREN MIGHT NOT TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT ABUSE /NEGLECT

- Child cannot verbalize what happened
- Child may be taking care of his or her parent's emotional needs (Role Reversal)
- The child may feel he or she deserved the abuse

- The child loves his or her parents
- The child fears the parents will go to jail
- The child fears he or she will go to a foster home or institution
- The child fears retaliation
- The child fears what friends will say
- The child fears that adults will not believe him or her

YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

A person wishing to report suspected child abuse or neglect can call any state or local law enforcement agency or Child Protective Services (CPS), a department of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDFPS). TDFPS has a toll-free 24-hour Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400. A report can also be made on line through the Department of Family and Protective Services website. When a child appears to be in immediate danger of serious harm, it is best to call 911 (where that service is available) or the nearest police or sheriff's department, to ensure the fastest possible response time to protect the child. Reports of child abuse or neglect made in "good faith" and "without malice" are confidential and immune from civil liability. Failure to report suspected child abuse is a Class B misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$ 1,500 or imprisonment up to 180 days or both fine and imprisonment.

Website: www.txabusehotline.org

Telephone: 1-800-252-5400

The law is very clear on who must report child abuse:

The Texas Family Code, §261.101. states:

Sec. 261.101. PERSONS REQUIRED TO REPORT; TIME TO REPORT. (a) A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.

(b) If a professional has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected, or that a child is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code, and the professional has cause to believe that the child has been abused as defined by Section 261.001 or 261.401, the professional shall make a report not later than the 48th hour after the hour the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected or is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code. A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. In this subsection, "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, employees of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

(c) The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, a mental health professional, and an employee of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services.

(d) Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only:

- (1) as provided by Section 261.201; or
- (2) to a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

CHILD ABUSE AS IT PERTAINS TO CHILD CARE TEACHERS WORKING IN A LICENSED FACILITY IN TEXAS

The State of Texas takes allegations of child abuse very seriously and all child care workers employed in Texas are held to a higher standard than that of the normal population. The following is quoted from the Texas Family Code and defines child abuse occurring in a licensed child care center. Note the language is relatively vague and can pertain to even the smallest infraction which could include grabbing a child roughly.

Sec. 261.401. AGENCY INVESTIGATION. (a) Notwithstanding Section 261.001, in this section:

(1) "Abuse" means an intentional, knowing, or reckless act or omission by an employee, volunteer, or other individual working under the auspices of a facility or program that causes or may cause emotional harm or physical injury to, or the death of, a child served by the facility or program as further described by rule or policy.

(2) "Exploitation" means the illegal or improper use of a child or of the resources of a child for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain by an employee, volunteer, or other individual working under the auspices of a facility or program as further described by rule or policy.

(3) "Neglect" means a negligent act or omission by an employee, volunteer, or other individual working under the auspices of a facility or program, including failure to comply with an individual treatment plan, plan of care, or individualized service plan, that causes or may cause substantial emotional harm or physical injury to, or the death of, a child served by the facility or program as further described by rule or policy.

CHILD ABUSE AND MINIMUM STANDARDS

There is further mention of child abuse in the Minimum Standards. The following citations generally cover those areas that pertain to child abuse.

746.1201(1) Demonstrate competency, good judgment, and self-control in the presence of children and when performing assigned responsibilities

746.1201(4) Responsibilities of Employees and Caregivers—Ensure that No Child is Abused, Neglected or Exploited while in the care of the center

746.1201(5) Report suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation to DFPS as specified in Texas Family Code, §261.101

746.2803(1) A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which includes at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior,
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements, and
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

It is imperative that employees who work with children in a child care center understand the gravity of these laws. Even the slightest bruise or scratch can constitute abuse in the eyes of the law. If a teacher in a child care center is found guilty of child abuse, they will not be able to work in a licensed facility in Texas. Their name will be placed on the Central Registry which is used during background checks to determine eligibility to work. The best way to protect yourself is to always use positive discipline and monitor your emotions closely.

WAYS THAT CHILD CARE WORKERS CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM BEING UNFAIRLY CHARGED WITH AN ABUSE OR NEGLECT VIOLATION

No one ever thinks it will happen to them, but there are people who get angry and retaliate in a way that they feel will hurt you the most. In other cases, it is possible that you may be at fault. Here are a few things that have worked in the past to protect employees.

1. Understand child development
2. Maintain a professional attitude and demonstrate professionalism at all times
3. Develop a good relationship with each parent and make it a point to get to know them and their needs
4. Know and follow all Texas Minimum Standards at all times
5. Create a buddy system so you are not left alone with certain children. If you are there by yourself, make sure that you are visible to the camera surveillance system.
6. Document any changes in children and keep a daily log of suspected abuse, noting marks that the child may have when arriving at the center, any changes in behavior, any unexplained pain.

7. Never put yourself in a questionable position such as helping a five year old in the bathroom with the door shut. (Bathroom doors should always remain open)
8. Identify and deal with any conflicts with parents as they arise. If you cannot or do not feel comfortable with a particular parent, go to the director for assistance
9. Pay close attention to safety and supervision issues as outlined in this training
10. Identify your stress level and remove yourself from a situation if you feel you cannot handle it in a professional manner.
11. Ask for help or a break if you feel your tension is rising; Take a Time Out: Call the office for help with a difficult child. Someone from the office will come and get the child or help deal with him in the classroom.

HELPING ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

From time to time, child care workers come in contact with children who have been victims of abuse or neglect. Your students may start talking about it to you because they trust and know you. Hearing a child talk about an abusive situation is very hard and it is often difficult to know what to say. Other caregivers in this situation react in different ways, but your reaction to the child is very important to that child and even the youngest of children are likely to respond to your body language and emotions. If you react with any aversion or question the truth to his story, he may stop talking about it with you. At this point he will feel that you don't trust him and this will prevent his getting the help he needs. It also prevents the abuse from stopping.

The best way to react to his story is to be sensitive and listen carefully to the child. Keep in mind that it is very difficult for the child to talk about being abused. This is especially hard for children who have been sexually abused. Even as hard as it is to believe, the child still loves the person who abuses him. The child has gathered up all his courage to tell you about the abuse, so how you handle the conversation will determine whether you will be able to help him. In an article, Talking to a child who has been abused, authors Ramamoorthy and Myers-Walls has provided some important guidelines to follow if a child comes to you with an abuse story to tell.

HELPING A CHILD TELL HIS STORY

1. Remember talking about abuse is not easy so it is important for you to help make the child feel comfortable. A quiet, private area is best, but one that is familiar to the child. If privacy is not possible, limit the distractions, by telling other children that you are in a conversation and will help them later. Ask that they go to another area of the room.
2. Reassure the child that it is not her fault. Most children who are abused feel, or are told by their abusers, that they are to blame for their own abuse. It is very important to tell the child that she is not guilty and that she is not responsible for the abuse. Let them know that they have not done anything wrong.

3. Don't react with shock, anger, disgust. Your reactions to the child are very important to the child. He will be watching your reaction closely. Be calm. When you react with hatred or anger, he will not feel comfortable talking to you anymore. He may also feel frightened and mixed up. This will prevent you from acting swiftly to get him help.
4. Do not force a child to talk, but rather give him time time. Silence in a conversation is not bad. Let him talk to you at his own pace. If the child is unwilling to talk or seems uncomfortable, don't pressurize him to do so. If the child seems uncomfortable when talking about certain specific things, don't press her for details. You can change the topic to something that the child is more comfortable talking about.
5. Don't force a child to show injuries. If the child is willing to show you his injuries, you may allow him to do so. However, when a child is unwilling to show you his injuries, you may not insist that he do so. Also, you cannot insist that a child take off his clothing so that you can see his injuries.
6. Use terms and language that the child can understand. If the child says something that you don't understand, like a word for a body part, ask the child to explain or to point to the body part. Don't correct or make fun of the words the child is using. When you use the same words as the child does, it helps the child feel less confused and more relaxed. The child will feel that you understand him.
7. Don't 'interview' the child. The purpose of your discussion with the child is to gather enough information so that you can make an informed report to the local CPS agency or to your supervisor. When you have the information you need, you must stop the discussion. Don't try to prove that abuse has happened. This is not your job.
8. Ask appropriate questions. The questions that you ask the child must be appropriately worded. Choose your language carefully. This ensures that you get correct information from the child. For example, if you see a bruise on a child and you suspect that it is the result of abuse, you may say to the child, "That looks painful. Do you want to tell me how you got it" or "Do you want to talk about that bruise you have". These are examples of open-ended questions that will help you obtain information. It would be inappropriate to say, "Did you get that bruise when someone hit you?" Remember that you can do more harm by supplying a child with words and ideas. Let the child tell her own story and give you the answers.
9. Don't ask 'why' questions. Why questions like, "Why did he hit you?" or "Why she do that?" will only confuse a child more. Remember that children who are abused often do not understand why it is happening. These types of questions will force them to think about the reasons for the abuse. 'Why' questions also will not give you any helpful information.
10. Don't teach the child new terms or words. As much as teachers like to teach, teaching is not appropriate at this time. Don't teach the child new words or give her new ideas. This is harmful. When you do this, you are biasing the child. Also, when you teach a child a new term or word, you are changing the child's original disclosure. This is important in relation to

the court and law.

11. Find out what the child wants from you. A child may ask you to promise not to tell anyone. He may ask you to take him home with you. He may ask you what you are going to do. It is good to know what the child is expecting from you. This will help you in deciding what your course of action should be. But remember, if you suspect abuse, you must report. That is the law.
12. Be honest with the child. Let the child know what you are going to do. This will build trust. Be honest about what you can do for him. Don't promise him things that cannot be done. For example- let him know that you may have to tell someone so that he will not be hurt anymore. Then he will not be surprised or afraid when he finds out that someone knows.
13. Confirm the child's feelings. Let the child know that it is okay to feel scared, hurt, confused or angry.
14. Be supportive. Let the child know that you are glad she told you about the abuse. Let her know that you believe her and that you care about her. Some children may think that you will not like them anymore because of what they told you. Assure her that you are still her friend.
15. Remember: the safety of the child is most important. Be sensitive to and aware of the child's safety. Keep in mind that a child might be further abused if he reports that he has spoken to someone about the abuse. If you feel that the child is in danger, you must contact the local child protection agency immediately.

HELP FOR ABUSED CHILDREN

Once child abuse or neglect has occurred, therapeutic intervention is usually required for the victimized child, the abusers, and others who may have been affected by the abuse. Therapeutic intervention may serve to prevent serious, lasting emotional and behavioral problems for the victim and family. Without this intervention, the likelihood of abused children becoming adult perpetrators is increased. Therapy can help children acquire a sense of control over their lives and help them avoid being victimized and feeling helpless. Without therapy, abusers are likely to continue assaulting their own children, their grandchildren, or other children. Spouses of abusers may never gain the tools to protect their children from further abuse without therapeutic intervention. Therapy may take many forms, but it is a necessary element for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

WORKING WITH ABUSED CHILDREN IN THE CLASSROOM

It is often easier to help a child if we understand him. His behaviors, while still unacceptable are easier to deal with because we understand where they originated, what to expect and how to help. It is also

helpful to have a specific plan to deal with specific problems should they arise. Abused children need the same things as other children, but perhaps in larger quantities. They need a secure environment, structure, consistence and predictability. They need to see the cause and effect relationship. They also need to learn to self-regulate. The following information was taken from a Power Point Presentation by Beverly H. Bullock, LCSW and Deborah Edwards, PsyD. On working with children know to have been abused. Certain behaviors demand certain responses from teachers. These authors recognize six behaviors commonly seen in the classroom:

1. Behaving Aggressively
2. Hurting others without seeming to care
3. Hurting others without seeming to care
4. Being hyper vigilant
5. Dissociating themselves
6. Fearing Failure

BEHAVING AGGRESSIVELY

When children act aggressively towards others, it is very important that teachers remain cool, calm and collected. The objective is for children to begin to observe and then identify with the teacher. Children who are used to violence in the home many not know any other way to react to situation except through violence. When a child observes an adult confronting a potentially stressful situation in a calm way, they realize that there is more than one way to deal with situation. It gives the child an opportunity to view a new way of behaving.

Teachers should always acknowledge the anger in the child and let him know that he is entitled to his feelings. At the same time, teachers can also help the child begin to recognize their own personal symptoms of anger. If a child can begin to identify signs in his body that anger is mounting, he can then learn “cooling down” techniques such as deep breathing, or even drawing about his anger. Children should always be encouraged to verbalize their feelings by putting their emotions into words (Use your words). You don’t have to agree, you just have to listen.

Sometimes children become aggressive because they do not see that they have any control over the situation. They feel helpless and these feelings stem from the emotional state they found themselves in when abused—unable to protect themselves. If this is the case, teachers can help the child obtain a sense of power and control over their destiny by giving them choices. Encourage a problem solving approach.

HURTING OTHERS WITHOUT SEEMING TO CARE

Many abused children repress their feelings of hurt or pain as a self-preservation technique. This repression destroys any empathy they might have had, so they do not realize that others are feeling pain. The first thing that the teacher must do is stop the abused child from hurting others. Teachers can then recognize the child's pain, explain to the child that it does hurt when someone is mean to them and then help them acknowledge the pain in others. The teacher is thus trying to rebuild empathy in the child.

DELIBERATELY ANNOYING OTHERS

Child abuse is not predictable. Children who are abused never know what will set off their maltreatment, so they begin to feel helpless to control the situation. As odd as it might seem, the abused child will deliberately provoke misbehavior. If caught and disciplined, at least they are in control because they know why they are being punished. These children need predictable environments where the routine is stable. They also need to know what will happen and when it will happen and they need predictable rules and consequences. Anything a teacher can do to provide an orderly environment where rules do not change, routines do not change, and structure predominates, will help these children.

Some abused children never receive any positive attention. The only attention they get is when they are abused. Even negative attention is better than no attention. They may provoke or annoy others to seek attention. All children need attention, but especially those children who have been abused. As teachers, we can help them through positive reinforcement. They should be given responsibilities in the classroom that will provide attention to them. Provide opportunities for them to talk while you listen, share their interests or hobbies, and acknowledge them by name frequently.

BEING HYPER VIGILANT

As was previously mentioned, abuse is unpredictable so children never know when they are going to "get it." It is not easy to relax when you are in a state such as this. Teachers can help the child to relax by providing a structured, predictable environment. Teachers who remain calm, even under pressure provide the best role models for these children.

DISSOCIATING THEMSELVES

Abused children sometimes dissociate themselves from their environment meaning that they are there in the flesh, but their mind is elsewhere. They do this to lessen the pain. Even though the classroom is a safe place, abused children might dissociate themselves when they experience something that reminds them of their abuse. They are likely to look "spacey" as if they are off in "lala land." If a teacher sees that a child is going into this state of mind, she can help by standing close to the child and softly calling the child's name. Never reprimand the child for dissociating as this only causes more stress. Help the child deal with feelings of sadness and anger.

FEARING FAILURE

Some abuse occurs in children because parents have unrealistically high expectations. These parents will either physically or emotionally abuse their child if he does not live up to their expectations. Children then become paralyzed by this fear. Teachers can help in this area by teaching a problem solving approach to everyday challenges. (1) State the Problem, (2) Brainstorm solutions, (3) Choose a solution, (4) Implement the solution, (5) Evaluate, (6) If the solution failed, return to number 2 and begin again.

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

So far, we have looked at identifying, reporting, and dealing with abused children. We have seen that the cost to society is immense and the personal toll devastating. How much better would it be if we could prevent it from ever happening in the first place?

The process we go through as child care workers may help prevent an abused child from being harmed further by recognizing, reporting, and initiating child protective services.

Primary child abuse prevention can be defined as the preparation of communities and parents for rearing their children in a no-abusive way. This method works for parents with adequate parenting knowledge and skills and who live in communities that can support and provide children with a safe nurturing environment.

A second type of prevention is called Secondary Prevention and is intended for high-risk families in great need of information and assistance. Secondary prevention or outreach as it is sometimes called or early intervention targets families before they reach the point of abuse. .

Finally, tertiary prevention helps to rebuild the lives of families in which abuse and neglect occur.

EDUCATING PARENTS

Most people who have never received any formal parenting education learn parenting skills from their own parents. They treat their children the way they remember their own parents treating them. In families where adults have limited parenting skills, abusive behavior can be passed from one generation to the next. Some parents may have no idea how to shape their children's behavior other than by yelling at them and hitting them because that is what was done to them. They may have no idea of the damage that they can inflict on a child. Many have no way of preparing for the amount of work and stress that goes along with parenting.

Factors such as parental stress, lack of parenting skills, and lack of knowledge contribute to child abuse, and all can be reduced by helping parents learn about the job and the realities of parenting. They can learn new ways to try to make a baby stop crying, for example. They can be trained to use new ways to reduce their own feelings of helplessness and anger when a baby does not stop crying

Parents can also be taught how to structure a child's environment and schedule to make good behaviors easier and more natural for the child. They can learn how to reinforce positive behavior with praise and rewards. They can be taught about child development so that they will have an understanding about what to expect at different ages. Sometimes parents have unreasonable expectations such as demanding a type of behavior that a child is too young to achieve leads to abuse. Finally, they can learn about effective forms of discipline other than yelling and hitting.

IS SPANKING OKAY?

Texas law allows the use of mild force, but not deadly force, against a child by the child's parent, or guardian. Many parents do, in fact, use corporal punishment (in the form of spanking) at least occasionally, and most do not, in fact, consider it abusive. Experts disagree about the sense of ever spanking a child. Some say that, combined with other methods of discipline, mild spanking of a small child is harmless and effective. Others argue that other means of discipline work as well as spanking or better, and that spanking is not necessary or advisable. Many child advocates and experts in child development contend that all forms of corporal punishment, including spanking, are harmful. Most people believe that spanking an infant is always inappropriate. The law does not attempt to judge between the various views on the best method of disciplining a child. What we do know is that severe corporal punishment can be extremely damaging and dangerous, and this is what the law prohibits as abuse.

Spanking is never permitted by child care workers.

WHEN SPANKING BECOMES ABUSIVE

Most parents who abuse their children truly believe that they are doing it in the best interest of the child. They often do not know the difference between spanking and abuse. Whether an action is abusive or not depends on the situation. For example, striking a child above the waist is more likely to be considered abuse whereas spanking is usually confined to the buttocks. When a parent uses something other than their bare hand, such as belts, paddles, hair brushes, there is more cause for concern. If no injury occurs, then it would not be considered abusive. Items such as phone cords, boards, yardsticks, ropes, shoes, and wires are likely to be considered abusive.

When parents hit a child out of anger, it may escalate out of control. Parents are taught to never hit a child in anger.

Finally, and most important, punishment is abusive if it causes injury. A blow that causes a red mark that fades in an hour is not likely to be judged abusive. On the other hand, a blow that leaves a bruise, welt, or swelling, or requires medical attention, probably would be judged abusive.

Another abusive form of discipline that does not involve hitting is severe isolation or confinement of a child. Many parents use "time out," loss of privilege, or confinement to a special area as a punishment or as a time for the child to reconsider his or her choices. But when the child is tied up, gagged, locked in

a closet, shut out, starved, or otherwise seriously deprived, the punishment is excessive and may constitute abuse.

PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Children should be taught at an early age that there are certain places on their bodies that no one should touch. Children need to learn to trust their own instincts and to assert their rights regarding their own bodies when a touch doesn't seem right. They should learn that certain parts of their bodies are private. These lessons can be taught in preschool, in special programs, and in the home.

Children should not be punished or humiliated for their natural curiosity that occurs between the ages of two and five. However, by age five, most children have begun to develop a sense of modesty. Teachers should be aware that molestation can occur at the hands of older children or same age children during play in private areas of the classroom and rest rooms. These areas should be monitored at all times. A child who plays aggressively or displays overtly sexual behavior may have learned it from television or video, but these behaviors are also indicators of sexual abuse. Children should know that when anyone touches them in a way they do not like, they have a right to actively resist and should tell someone they trust. It is not uncommon for a program on appropriate touch to trigger a disclosure from an abused child.

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POST TEST

- b. False
9. Young children who are acting out in a sexually explicit way could have been abused
- a. True
 - b. False
10. A six year old child comes into your center with bruises and cuts on her knees and shins. She normally does not have any noticeable injuries. She tells you she fell off her bike. Should you suspect child abuse instead?
- a. True
 - b. False
11. You have a new toddler in your classroom from Vietnam. You do not know his parents well as they are not proficient in English. As you go to change his diaper, you notice a large blue-black area on his lower back, just above his buttocks. Should you suspect abuse?
- a. True
 - b. False
12. A child recently told you that she was angry with her father because he hit her. Your best method for proceeding is to immediately suspect abuse and begin to question her about her injuries so you will be able to tell DFPS about the abuse.
- a. True
 - b. False
13. Women are more likely to abuse children than men
- a. True
 - b. False
14. Most people who abuse children are workers in child care centers
- a. True
 - b. False
15. In order for abuse to occur, the injury must be intentional and cause harm to the child
- a. True
 - b. False