

4a. Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy and Procedure

- Created 06/97
- Reviewed 04/26

Policy

When any LCC Head Start/EHS/ECEAP employee has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Children's Administration per Washington [RCW 26.44.040\(1\)\(a\)](http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.040) (app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=26.44.040) .

The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) within local communities in Washington State are responsible for receiving and investigating reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. Reports are received by Children's Administration/Child Protective Services (CPS) located in each community office and are assessed to determine whether the report meets the legal definition of abuse or neglect and how dangerous the situation is.

Reporting Procedure

- I. Who must report: All staff members; assistant teachers, teachers, family advocate staff, kitchen staff, office staff, bus drivers, bus monitors, etc.
- II. When to report: Anytime it is suspected that a child's physical or mental health or welfare may be affected by abuse or neglect. Staff shall contact the appropriate community agency immediately and not later than 48 hours from the date and time from when the reporting staff member became aware of suspected abuse or neglect.
- III. How to report:
 1. Discuss concerns with Area Manager or available member from the Leadership Team.
 2. A decision will be made whether an official report needs to be completed.
 - a. If the decision is to make a report: a written report will be completed and followed up with a telephone report to CPS. A written copy of the report will be kept in the ICP section of the site file and the original sent to the Program Coordinator for scanning into childplus.net. The Program Coordinator will then mail the report to CPS.
 - b. Program Coordinator will send out an email to DST (and shared program staff and Area Manager), Area

- Manager and CAST stating child's first initial and last name and "Community Referral" uploaded and date.
 - c. Document in Case Management (in ELMS and CP.NET) that a report was made to CPS with a log entry stating, "**Community Referral Made**". If more information is needed to be written, use an anecdotal and place it with the written report in the ICP section of the child's site file.
 - d. If the decision is not to report, detailed case management notes must be documented.
 3. If this is a shared family within the program, notify the other Direct Service Team program via phone promptly after the report to CPS is made.
 4. It is the responsibility of the CPS caseworker to notify the family of the CPS referral unless assistance in doing so is requested by CPS staff.
- IV. Before you make the report, organize your information:
The child's name, address, birthdate, parent's name, address, telephone, others living in the home (siblings/adults) and date of incident.
 1. What causes you to suspect that abuse has occurred? Write: It appears it is physical abuse, emotional abuse, etc.
 2. What exactly did the child or caregiver say or do and under what circumstances?
 3. Exactly where are any bruises or injuries, what do they look like and when did you first notice them?
 4. What has the child said about the injuries?
 5. Has the child's behavior changed recently? In what way? Has there been a chronic pattern of behavior?
 6. What other signs and symptoms of abuse does the child exhibit?
 7. What do you know about the child's family and home life?
 - Extended family members?
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Family strengths that can help the parent(s) care for and protect the child(ren)
 - Parent's socio-economic status
 - Parents resources
 - Resources or referrals that program has given caregiver to prevent or mediate incident(s) of risk
 - Previous history of mental health disorder
 - History of substance use
 - Parent's response to intervention, etc.
 8. Is there any information about previous incidences of abuse or neglect?
 9. Is the family on active or in-active military duty?
 10. Is there information on whether the child or family is of Native American ancestry?

- V. What to report: Reminder: Not one of these, but a collection of indicators.
1. Physical Abuse
 - Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **child**:
 - Unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones or black eyes.
 - Fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school.
 - Frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home.
 - Shrinks at the approach of adults.
 - Report injury by a parent or another adult caregiver.
 - Consider the possibility of physical abuse the when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
 - 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.

Author: National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)
 2. Neglect
 - Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**;
 - Is frequently absent from school.
 - Begs or steals food or money.
 - Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations or glasses.
 - Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor.
 - Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather.
 - Abuses alcohol or drugs.
 - States that there is no one at home to provide care.
 - Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
 - Appears to be indifferent to the child.
 - Seems apathetic or depressed.
 - Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner.
 - Is abuse alcohol or other drugs. *Author: National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)*
 3. Emotional
 - Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity or aggression.
 - Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example).
 - Is delayed in physical or emotional development.
 - Has attempted suicide.
 - Reports a lack of attachment to the parent.
 - Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when the **parent or other adult caregiver**:
 - Constantly blames, belittles or berates the child.
 - Is unconcerned about the child and refused to consider offers of help for the child's problems.
 - Overtly rejects the child.

Author: National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)
4. Sexual
- Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:
 - Has difficulty walking or sitting.
 - Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities.
 - Reports nightmares or bedwetting.
 - Experiences a sudden change in appetite.
 - Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.
 - Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14.
 - Runs away.
 - Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver.
 - Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **adult or other adult caregiver**:
 - 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.

Author: National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)
5. Signs of Child Abuse to Recognize During a Video Call

- Unexplained bruises or marks on a child.
 - A parent, caregiver or adult using harsh physical discipline.
 - Safety hazards within a child's reach such as unsecured weapons, drugs or unsanitary conditions.
 - The absence of food or family members appear to be losing weight.
 - Perishable food sitting out after multiple days.
 - Aggressive or repeated shouting.
 - Hearing hitting or things being broken.
 - The caregiver appearing intoxicated and unable to provide care.
6. If the incident happened in the home involving a family member or if a parent was aware of the situation but failed to intervene on the child behalf, it must be reported to CPS.
 7. Failing to take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of numbers 1 through 4.
 8. For any other reporting concerns, contact your Area Manager or other Leadership Team member.
- VI. Staff is available as advocates for parents.
- VII. Failure to pick up a child or be available for after school delivery:
1. In the event that no one is home at either the child's house or the alternate drop-off address, the child will be returned to the Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Center. The bus monitor or driver will notify the parent that the child has returned to the Center. It will be the parents' responsibility to pick the child up at the Center. Staff will try to contact all alternate care numbers listed. A member of the Leadership Team or their designee will call CPS one hour after the end of class, followed by a call to local law enforcement (Dispatch [577-3098](#)). Staff will problem solve with parents so the problem does not reoccur.
 2. If the child is a drive-in and the parent fails to pick up the child, staff will try to contact all family information numbers. A member of the Leadership Team or their designee will call CPS one hour after the end of class, followed by a call to local law enforcement (Dispatch [360-762-6800](#)).
- VIII. Allegations against Head Start/EHS/ECEAP Staff:
- a. In the event that a Head Start/EHS/ECEAP employee is suspected of an act of abuse or neglect, a report shall immediately be made to the Area Manager, Director, and/or Assistant Director.
 - b. A report will be filed with Child Protective Services.
 - c. The Area Manager, Director, and/or Assistant Director may take whatever action is necessary to ensure that children are safe until Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement (Dispatch [360-762-6800](#)) has completed the investigation.
 - d. The DCYF licensor will be notified along with the responsible Head Start Region X Program Specialist regarding any reports regarding

agency staff or volunteer compliance with federal, state, tribal, or local laws addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders. Examples of required reporting from ACF-IM-HS-22-07:

- **Child injuries that require either hospitalization or emergency room medical treatment**, such as a broken bone; a severe sprain; chipped or cracked teeth; head trauma; deep cuts; contusions or lacerations; or animal bites.
- **Inappropriate discipline**, which any type of conduct used to instill fear or humiliate rather than to educate a child, such as poking or pinching a child; making fun of or laughing about a child; using/withholding food or an activity as a punishment or reward; or isolating a child.
- **Potential child abuse and maltreatment**, such as grabbing, shoving, shaking, swatting, or dragging a child; spanking or any other type of corporal or physical punishment; binding, typing, or taping a child; terrorizing a child with threats or menacing acts; or any form of sexual contact.
- **Lack of supervision** while in the care or under the supervision of program staff, which includes leaving a child alone anywhere on the grounds of a Head Start facility (e.g., in a classroom, bathroom, on a playground), as well as outside the facility in a parking lot, on a nearby street, or on a bus or another program-approved transportation or excursion.
- Unauthorized release where a child is released from a Head Start facility, bus, or other approved program transportation to a person without the permission or authorization of a parent or legal guardian and whose identity had not been verified by photo identification.

IX. Where to report:

Department of Social & Health Services

Child Protective Services (CPS)

P.O. Box 330 – 711 Vine Street

Kelso, WA 98626

During Business Hours: [360-501-2600](tel:3605012600)

After Hours: [1-800-562-5624](tel:18005625624)

TTY: [1-800-624-6186](tel:18006246186) to place a direct TTY call

FAX: (360) 577-2382

You have a legal responsibility to report child abuse when you have reasonable cause to believe abuse has occurred. Simply reporting this abuse to your supervisor does not fulfill your legal responsibility unless a report is made.

Possible Abuse Indicators

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- a. Unexplained bruises and welts on any part of the body;
- b. Bruises of different ages (various colors);
- c. Injuries reflecting shape of article used (electrical cord, belt buckle, ping pong paddle);
- d. Injuries that regularly appear after absence or vacation;
- e. Unexplained burns, especially to soles, palms, back or buttocks;
- f. Burns with a pattern from an electric burner, iron or cigarette;
- g. Robe burns on arms, legs, neck or torso;
- h. Injuries consistent with information offered by the child;
- i. Immersion burns with a distinct boundary line;
- j. Unexplained lacerations, abrasions or fractures.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- a. Lags in physical development;
- b. Extreme behavior disorder;
- c. Fearfulness of adults or authority figures;
- d. Revelations of highly inappropriate adult behavior, i.e., being enclosed in a dark closet, forced to drink or eat inedible items.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- a. Venereal disease in a child of any age;
- b. Evidence of physical trauma or bleeding to the oral, genital or anal areas;
- c. Difficulty in walking or sitting;
- d. Refusing to change into gym clothes;
- e. Child running away from home and not giving any specific complaint;
- f. Pregnancy at 11 or 12 with no history of peer socialization;
- g. Sexual knowledge, behavior, or use of language not appropriate to age level.

Indicators of Sexual Exploitation

- a. Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child by any person;
- b. Allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution by any person.

Indicators of Human Trafficking

- a. Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the exchanging of children/ persons for a favor or an item;
- b. Allowing, permitting, encouraging or engaging in the exchange of children/ persons for a work value (a.k.a. forced slavery).

Indicators of Physical Neglect

- a. Lack of basic needs (housing, clothing, food);
- b. Lack of essential health care and high incidence of illness;
- c. Poor hygiene on a regular basis;
- d. Inappropriate clothing in inclement weather on a consistent basis;
- e. Consistent lack of supervision, especially for long periods;
- f. Abandonment.

Behavioral Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

- a. Wary of adult contact;
- b. Frightened of parents;
- c. Afraid to go home;
- d. Habitually truant or late to school;
- e. Arrives at school early and remains after school later than other students;
- f. Wary of physical contact by adults;
- g. Shows evidence of overall poor care;
- h. Parents describe child as "difficult" or "bad" or "evil";
- i. Inappropriately dressed for the weather - no coat or shoes in cold weather or long sleeves and high necklines in hot weather (possible hiding marks of abuse);
- j. Exhibit behavioral extremes: crying often or never, unusually aggressive or withdrawn and fearful.