

## REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

WHO TO CALL: Division of Family Resources/Department of  
Child Services 800-800-5556

**CALL IMMEDIATELY** to give time for the case workers to come to Head Start if they decide that they need to. Ask for someone to take your place in the classroom, if necessary, so that your call can remain confidential and so that you do not upset the children.

WHEN TO CALL:

- a) apparent abnormal bruises (remember these will differ from the type children get while playing)
- b) unidentified marks (burns, for example)
- c) when a child identifies an abuser (blank did such and such)
- d) when a child offers more than one “story” to explain a mark
- e) **anytime** you have reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected (if you think to yourself, *should I call*, then call)

### HAVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AVAILABLE WHEN YOU CALL:

- a. size and type of mark (bruise, burn, etc.)
- b. location of mark
- c. color of mark (greenish, blue, bright red, etc.)
- d. the child’s explanation
- e. the child’s name and family members’ names
- f. the parent or guardian name
- g. the child’s address
- h. the child’s date of birth
- i. information regarding the status of the home (dv, pets, conditions of the home, etc.)

### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. You are required, by law, to report suspected abuse and neglect. It is not your job to investigate. Do not pressure a child for explanations or answers. If you suspect abuse whether it

is substantiated or not, you are not liable. If you suspect abuse and do not report it, you can be arrested, as well as, face disciplinary action from Head Start.

2. Document that you made the report immediately. List dates, times, statements, etc. Send the documented report to the Family & Community Partnerships Manager, in a confidential manner. If it must be sent through inter-office mail, seal it in an envelope.
3. Do not expect a response from DFC. They are required by law to investigate abuse within 24 hours and neglect within 5 days. They are then required to file a report, however, that report is usually received by the Director and must be kept confidential. You are not entitled to an answer to your report and usually will not receive one.
4. If you have made a report about a child previously, and continue to see evidence of suspected abuse or neglect, you should continue to make your reports. Sometimes it takes a long time to “build a case” for abuse and neglect. Reports that are unsubstantiated are destroyed.
5. How much information you choose to share with a parent will vary by circumstance and be based on your relationship with the family. The DFC will not disclose who made the report, however parents are often able to figure it out and may state that they were told.

- DO**
- \* REPORT ANYTHING THAT MAKES YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE
  - \*ASK THE CHILD TO SHOW YOU WHERE THEY HURT IF THEY COMPLAIN
  - \*CONSIDER THE CHILD’S FEELINGS, BE DISCREET (REMEMBER IT TAKES A LOT FOR A CHILD TO CONFIDE)
  - \* REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE OFTEN PARENTS OF OTHER CHILDREN IN THE ROOM WITH YOU AND THEY MAY BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IS “GOING ON”
  - \*BE APPROACHABLE
- DON’T**
- \* MOVE AN ARTICLE OF CLOTHING TO GET A BETTER LOOK
  - \* BE CONSPICUOUS (THIS MEANS DON’T SINGLE A CHILD OUT)
  - \* DON’T ASK LEADING QUESTIONS (SUCH AS “DID SOMEONE HIT YOU?”), THIS COULD THROW AN ENTIRE CASE OUT