

**COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
OF
WESTERN INDIANA
HEAD START
CHILD ABUSE PROGRAM POLICY**

Introduction

This child abuse and neglect program policy has been written in accordance with the Federal Policy 1977, and the State Reporting Laws. Its purpose is to provide a philosophy of practice and a set of procedures that will govern the prevention, identification, treatment, and reporting of child abuse and neglect for this Head Start Program.

By Indiana statute, a child is being abused or neglected when:

- 1) His/her physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered as a result of the inability, refusal, or neglect of his/her parents, guardian, or custodian to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision;
- 2) His/her physical or mental health is seriously endangered due to injury by the act or omission of his/her parent, guardian, or custodian;
- 3) He/she is a victim of rape, deviant conduct, child molestation, exploitation, public indecency, prostitution or incest;
- 4) His/her parent, guardian, or custodian allows him/her to participate in an obscene performance;
- 5) His/her parent, guardian, or custodian allows him/her to commit a sex offense.

Philosophy Statement

Head Start recognizes the fact that one third of the reported cases of child abuse and neglect involve children who are less than six years old. Additionally, the program is aware that many of these children are children with disabilities. With these facts in mind, it is our mission to make every possible effort to assist in the elimination and prevention of either suspected or identified maltreatment among Head Start children.

Head Start will strive to serve as a model of support for abused and neglected children. Every effort will be made to maintain a close working relationship with the local CPS in recruiting and retaining abused and neglected children. The Child Protective Services agency will be recognized as the key organization in the community child protective system. It is our mission to report all suspected child abuse and neglect incidents in accordance with the Head Start Federal Policy and the State Reporting Law. We recognize our mandatory reporting status and we are aware that the state law grants immunity to persons making reports in good faith.