

**COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
OF
WESTERN INDIANA
HEAD START
PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The purpose of this child abuse and neglect policy is three-fold:

1. To aid in the prevention and elimination of child abuse and neglect.
2. To establish a close working relationship with our protective service agencies.
3. To assist our program to be as knowledgeable as possible about the problem of child abuse and neglect.

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Family Services Specialist is the central coordinator for all child abuse and neglect activities, including training, reporting and follow-up procedures.

I. If a child is in immediate danger or requires immediate medical attention:

- a. **Call 911**
- b. Complete FS 16 Head Start Child Abuse Report Documentation,
- c. **Notify the Indiana Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-800-5556**
- d. Contact the Head Start Health Services Specialist for instruction on how to proceed.
- e. Contact the Family Services Specialist to update on the report and call to Indiana Child Abuse Hotline.
- f. Document observations and CPS contact on Head Start Family Service Log/Head Start Child's Health Chart.

II. If child is not in immediate danger or doesn't require immediate medical attention:

- a. Complete FS 16 Head Start Child Abuse Report Documentation
- b. **Notify the Indiana Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-800-5556**
- c. Contact the Family Services Specialist to update on the report and call to Indiana Child Abuse Hotline.
- d. The Family Service Specialist will determine whether the parent should be notified of the report. If parent or guardian is to be notified, determine when, how and by whom.
- e. Document observations and CPS contact on Head Start Family Service Log/Head Start Child's Health Chart.

III. If behavioral or physical observations lead you to be concerned that abuse/neglect may be occurring:

- a. Discuss your observations with the Family Service Specialist who will decide if there is enough information to warrant making a report.
- b. Document concerns and observations on the Family Service/Health Observation log. Be sure to include dates, times, persons involved, description of incident, etc. You may be requested to begin an anecdotal record of your observations on that child. Anecdotal records are factual, objective accounts of the incident.
- c. Complete FS 16 Head Start Child Abuse Report Documentation
- d. Notify the Indiana Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-800-5556.
- e. Family Service Specialist will discuss with you any actions that need to be taken with the family.

IV. In the event that a HS employee is suspected of an act of abuse or neglect

- a. **The HS Director will take appropriate action according to the personnel policy.**
- b. **A report will be filed with Indiana Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-800-5556**
- c. **A report will be filed with FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning Individual Child Care Center Licensing Consultant**
- d. **The Director will meet with the child's parents or guardians.**

V. Orientation and training of HS staff:

- a. All staff members will receive a basic orientation during the first 2 weeks of employment focusing on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.
- b. Additional training specifically relating to individual roles and responsibilities will be offered annually for the employees.

VI. Orientation and Training for Head Start Parents and Guardians:

- a. Parents and guardians will receive a basic orientation during their initial enrollment process in which they will be informed of the following:
 1. Head Start's role in reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.
 2. Head Start's role in serving as an advocate for Head Start families.
 3. Parent training activities that will assist them in improving their child-rearing practices and increase their knowledge of child development.
 4. This information will be found in written form in the Parent Handbook.
- b. Parents may attend all staff training sessions relating to child abuse and neglect.
- c. The Child Abuse and Neglect Program Policy will be made available to all parents.
- d. Further training on the subject of child abuse and neglect will be made available for parents on request.

VII. Confidentiality

- a. All records relating to suspected child abuse or neglect will be kept in locked files.
- b. Persons wishing to review the records will need to follow the Head Start confidentiality policy.