
Subject : Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting

Source: This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45 CFR 1304.40.

Policy

Early Head Start staff will comply with state law requiring them to report any cases of suspected or identified child abuse. These reports are made to Child Protective Services (CPS). Early Head Start will cooperate fully with the CPS and will *not* undertake, on its own, to intervene in cases of suspected abuse. Early Head Start staff will preserve confidentiality of all records pertaining to child abuse in accordance with state law.

Provision of support and resources to the family to address potential abuse/neglect issues is encouraged. All efforts will be made to provide information on effective positive behavior support and opportunities to discuss future prevention will be addressed by the Social Services Manager or family service worker.

Benchmark

Initial contact with CPS will occur 100% of the time within 48 hours via the hotline (1-800-252-5400) or www.txabusehotline.org.

Definitions and Reporting Clarifications

1. Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.
2. Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.
3. Children are unmarried persons under the age of eighteen; reporting is required for all children.
4. Each Early Head Start staff person is responsible for reporting and documenting cases of suspected or identified child abuse to CPS within 48 hours of disclosure or incident by calling **1-800-252-5400** or **www.txabusehotline.org**.
5. Parent and community volunteers are not required but encouraged to report their concerns to an Early Head Start staff member and CPS. If there is a discrepancy on the decision to report, that volunteer or parent can exercise the option of reporting directly to CPS themselves.

Procedure

1. When abuse is suspected, contact the Center Coordinator or supervisor immediately.
2. Complete the Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Forms.
3. The Center Coordinator or supervisor will notify the Social Services Manager.
4. The person with the most knowledge of the suspected child abuse or neglect will make the report with the Center Coordinator or supervisor and the Social Services Manager.
5. If a member of CPS comes during our hours of operation they should present an official identification or badge before interviewing a child. The CPS worker of law enforcement official must also complete the ***Record of Visit to Child*** sheet along with the site manager.

6. **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES DO ANY INVESTIGATIVE WORK**

YOURSELF! The CPS workers are trained professionals; let them do their job. You have done yours by making the call.

7. All documentation of suspected child abuse and/or neglect will be filed under lock and key in the Social Services/Parent Involvement Manager's office to assure confidentiality of those records.