

**Youth Development, Inc.  
Early/Head Start  
Child Health and Safety  
Program Design & Management**

**Policy Number:**

**Effective Date:**

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**Agency Approval Date:**

12/5/1996

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**Policy Council Approval**

**Date:** 8/22/1996,

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**Governing Board Approval**

**Date:** 12/5/1996

**COMPONENT:** Child Health and Safety 1304.22(a)(5), 1304.41(a)(2)(vi), & Program Design & Management (1304.52(k)(3)(i))

**SUBJECT:** Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** To protect all Head Start children from abuse and neglect.

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:**

**IF A NON-EMPLOYEE IS SUSPECTED OF ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT:**

1. All direct services staff will receive training annually on Child Abuse and Neglect Indicators and Reporting Procedures. Staff will receive a copy of the Procedures. A copy of the procedure will be posted in all YDI licensed facilities.
2. YDI/Head Start policy states that any person who suspects abuse or neglect must report it **immediately** to Child Protective Services/Statewide Central Intake (CPS/SCI). A copy of the report will be submitted to the center director and the child abuse designee. When possible, the staff reporting should have a fellow staff person witness the phone call made to report.
3. The person who has reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused and/or neglected will also report the incident to their immediate supervisor.
4. It is the responsibility of the CPS/SCI and/or local law enforcement to confirm or rule out suspected abuse or neglect. It is the responsibility of these agencies to ensure the safety and welfare of the child/children after the report has been made.
5. Documentation shall be completed within 24 hours of the person making the report using the Head Start Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect Form. A copy is to be submitted to the Center Director and to the Child Abuse Designee (the Director of Mental Health Services) in a sealed envelope.
6. This report shall be maintained in a locked file cabinet to safeguard confidentiality.

**WHEN AN EMPLOYEE AND/OR NON-CLIENT-FAMILY VOLUNTEER AND/OR CONTRACTOR (HEREAFTER “STAFF”) IS ACCUSED AND/OR SUSPECTED OF ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT OF A CHILD ENROLLED IN ONE OF THE YDI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES ARE IN EFFECT:**

1. All direct services staff will receive training annually on Child Abuse and Neglect Indicators and Reporting Procedures. Staff will receive a copy of the Procedures. A copy of the procedure will be posted in all YDI licensed facilities.
2. YDI/Head Start policy states that any person who suspects abuse or neglect by a staff member must report it **immediately** to CPS/SCI and the New Mexico Child Care Licensing. A copy of the report will be submitted to the center director and the child abuse designee.
3. The person who has reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused and/or neglected will also report the incident to their immediate supervisor.
4. It is the responsibility of the CPS/SCI and/or local law enforcement to confirm or rule out suspected abuse or neglect. It is the responsibility of these agencies to ensure the safety and welfare of the child/children after the report has been made.
5. Documentation shall be completed within 24 hours of the person making the report using the Head Start Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect Form. A copy is to be submitted to the Center Director and Child Abuse Designee (the Director of Mental Health Services) in a sealed envelope.
6. This report shall be maintained in a locked file cabinet to safeguard confidentiality.
  - a. All staff will be required to sign a disclosure form during orientation.
  - b. It is the responsibility of any staff member directly observing the abuse or neglect to take reasonable and prudent action to stop the abuse and neglect.
  - c. A detailed incident/accident report will be completed by each person observing the incident/accident and this report will be submitted directly to the Center Director, the Child Abuse Designee, and Human Resources Director.
  - d. The Center Director may contact the local law enforcement and follow-up with New Mexico Child Care Licensing if applicable.
  - e. The parent of the child involved in the incident/accident/complaint will be notified by the Center Director as soon as possible.
  - f. The Center Director will inform the staff member of the reported allegations and that it is the responsibility of the local law enforcement and licensing authority to substantiate or dismiss the allegation.
  - g. Staff accused or suspected of abuse or neglect will be removed from the center/classroom during the time of the investigation. The staff member removed will be *given the option* of working in an administrative position or taking leave.

- h. If an incident has occurred that is not of a magnitude to be considered abuse or neglect (i.e., staff member has been cleared by Statewide Central Intake/Child Protective Services, law enforcement, and New Mexico Child Care Licensing), it may nevertheless show poor judgment on the part of the staff member. YDI Early Childhood Education may conduct an investigation into the incident to determine whether poor judgment and/or incompetence on the part of the staff member in question has taken place. This investigation may be conducted by the Child Abuse Designee (Director of Mental Health), an associate director, or a representative of Human Resources, depending on the nature of the incident that has taken place and the personnel involved – this determination will be made by YDI ECE administration. Program responses to this investigation may include dismissal of staff members, reassignment of staff members, a period of work shadowing for the staff members in question, training of the staff members, or no response at all depending upon the findings. Staff members may be required to complete a work improvement plan involving additional training in one or more areas such as abuse and neglect, appropriate classroom interactions, ages and stages of development etc.
- i. Allegations that are proved to be unfounded and unsubstantiated may result in immediate reinstatement of the staff member to their position.
- j. If the allegations of abuse or neglect are substantiated the staff member will be disciplined, up to and including termination. Additionally, repetitive incidents of lesser magnitude may be grounds for termination of employment/engagement/contract with YDI.

**A COPY OF THIS POLICY MUST BE POSTED IN THE CLASSROOMS**