Guidelines for Child Abuse Detection and Reporting

Summer Academy@UK Guidelines for Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse

(adapted from and with thanks to the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food & Environment's Kentucky County Extension Service 4-H Youth Development Office)

Today’s society is faced with many situations that require our attention in protecting the young people that we serve. At the University of Kentucky, we assume responsibility for the care and direction of the youth who participate in our programs. Where suspected child abuse does occur, care must be taken to protect the accused, the accuser and the victim, if different. A calm and clearheaded response is necessary throughout these trying moments. To help Academy@UK faculty and staff prepare for the decisions that must be made, we offer the following:

1. Be alert at all times to situations that may allow child abuse.
2. Design a program that does not allow for unsupervised free time.
3. Instructors and staff need to make themselves available to youth who seem distraught or in need of counsel.

What is Child Abuse?

“Abused or neglected child” is defined by Kentucky State Law KRS 600.020. This describes a minor on whom an adult has inflicted, or allows to be inflicted, any physical or emotional injury other than by accidental means.

Who is Required to Report Child Abuse?

Kentucky State Law KRS 620.030 states: “Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency or the Kentucky state police; the cabinet or its designated representative; the commonwealth’s attorney or the county attorney by telephone or otherwise. Any supervisor who receives from an employee a report of suspected dependency, neglect or abuse shall promptly make a report to the proper authorities for investigation.” Only attorneys who gather information from their clients and clergy who in their capacity as a spiritual advisor gather information privately from a penitent, are exempt from the mandate to make a report based on such information.

The following are outlined steps to follow in a case of suspected child abuse at the Summer Academy@UK:

1. Any adult associated with the program who has knowledge of suspected child abuse shall immediately inform the Program Directors about the situation – do not interrogate the individual.
2. An instructor or GUK staff should remain with the abused individual, separate and apart from the others. If medical attention is necessary, the child should be taken to the University of Kentucky Emergency Room.
3. A Summer Academy@UK Incident Report needs to be filled out completely. The information on this form is critical for developing the information needed by protective services personnel, police or for consultation with UK Legal Counsel.
4. The GUK3.0 Academy@UK Program Directors will call the child abuse district hotline number: 859-245-5258 (Fayette County) or 877-597-2331 (statewide). If the Directors determine that this is a non-emergency situation, i.e., it does not require an immediate response from Child Protection Staff at the Cabinet for Families and Children, the staff and instructors may want to use the online Kentucky Child/Adult Protective Services Reporting System: https://prd.chfs.ky.gov/ReportAbuse/home.aspx. (Note: this online service is only monitored M – F 8 am – 4:30 pm.)
5. If a call is made, the Directors should ask who is to notify the parents/guardian of the victim/accused. They will give guidance on who should be contacted, e.g. state police, local authorities. No one else should contact parents/guardian unless instructed to do so.
6. Depending upon the situation, UK Police and/or State Police may be notified, after consultation with UK Legal Counsel. A decision would be made at this time concerning the disposition of the suspect: police custody or returned to his/her home.
7. In consultation with UK Legal Counsel and UK Public Relations, only one person is to be designated as spokesperson, if contacted by the media.

How Do I Recognize Child Abuse?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Indicators</th>
<th>Behavioral Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Abuse</td>
<td>• self-destructive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• extremely withdrawn or aggressive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• uncomfortable with physical contact</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• arrives at school early or stays late as if afraid to be at home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• chronically runs away (adolescents)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• wears clothing inappropriate to weather to cover body</td>
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<td>Physical Neglect</td>
<td>• regularly displays fatigue or falls asleep in class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• steals food, begs from classmates</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• reports that no caretaker is at home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• frequently absent or tardy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• self-destructive</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• school dropout (adolescents)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• abandonment</td>
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<td>• unattended medical records</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• consistent lack of supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• lice, distended stomach, emaciated</td>
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### Sexual Abuse
- Tor, stained or bloody clothing
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia
- Venereal disease
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections
- Often there are no visible indicators
- Withdrawal, chronic depression
- Excessive seductiveness and touching (Touching may not be inappropriate, but there is too much of it.)
- Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings
- Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
- Peer problems, lack of involvement
- Massive weight change
- Eating disorder
- Suicide attempts (adolescents)
- Hysteria, lack of emotional control
- Sudden school difficulties
- Chronically runs away
- Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex
- Threatened by physical contact, closeness

### Emotional Maltreatment
- Speech disorders
- Delayed physical development
- Substance abuse
- Ulcers, asthma, severe allergies
- Habit disorders (sucking, rocking)
- Antisocial, destructive
- Neurotic traits (sleep disorder)
- Passive and aggressive—behavioral extremes
- Delinquent behavior (adolescents)
- Developmentally delayed

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### How Do I Recognize and Respond to a Child's Disclosure of Abuse?

Children disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may disclose through very direct and specific communication; however, that is not usually the case. More often, the child will disclose abuse through indirect means such as: "Our neighbor wears funny underwear," or "My brother bothers me at night," or by asking that you promise not to tell if a secret is disclosed.

It is important to listen, encourage, and assure the child. Ask questions if the child's comments seem to be covering up an underlying problem. Let the child know you cannot promise to keep it a secret if something or someone is hurting the child.

Occasionally a child will disclose abuse during a project or program. It is important for the agent/volunteer to acknowledge the disclosure but not discuss it in front of the other youth. After the program, the agent/volunteer should talk with the child in a quiet, private place.

Below are some suggestions for responding to disclosure.

**DO:**
- Believe the child.
- Find a quiet, private place to talk to the child.
- Take a positive approach to the problem; reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing by telling someone.
- Listen to the child without interruption; let the child talk openly about the situation.
- Rephrase important thoughts for clarification—use the child's vocabulary.
- Ask only for information that will clarify your suspicion. Do not ask "leading" questions or put words into the child’s mouth. The proper authorities will gather the detailed information.
- Tell the child that there is help available.
- Reassure the child that you will do your best to protect and support him/her.
- Let the child know you must report the abuse to someone who has helped other children in the same situation.
- Report the incident to the proper authorities.
- Let the child know what will happen when the report is made (if you have appropriate information).
- Seek out your own support person(s) to help you work through your feelings about the disclosure (if needed).

**DON'T:**
- Promise confidentiality.
- Express panic or shock.
- Convey anger or impatience if the child is not ready to discuss the abuse.
- Make negative comments about the perpetrator or launch into a moral lecture about the incident.
- Disclose the information indiscriminately—tell only those adults who need the information to protect and support the child.

**REMEMBER:**
- The report should be made as soon as there is reason to suspect abuse (review indicators list).
- The report is NOT an accusation against a parent or child, but merely a report of a suspicion. The report should be handled in a sensitive, non-judgmental manner.
- If a person fails to report, it leaves the child (or other children) potentially at risk for future abuse.
- The person who reports "in good faith" is immune from liability, both civil and criminal.
- Kentucky State Law KRS620.030 states that is the duty of anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is "dependent, abused, or neglected" to report this information to the police or Cabinet for Families and Children.