

DCDEE Announces the Latest Edition

Be on the Safe Side: April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and was established in 1983, in hopes of campaigning for awareness of child maltreatment and to encourage a collaborative front, so our children have a chance of living healthier and more successful lives.

Know Your Role!

As child care providers, you are a vital part in the prevention and intervention of child maltreatment! You may see potential indicators of maltreatment in the children under your care—some children may even be more likely to disclose maltreatment to a child care provider than to a family member. It is required that all providers are aware of maltreatment indicators and to report any suspicions of maltreatment. Follow child care rules related to child maltreatment training: [10A NCAC 09 .1102\(g\)](#) and [10A NCAC 09 .1703\(a\)\(5\)](#) states the child care administrator, operator, and all staff members shall complete *Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment* training within 90 days of employment. This training shall count toward requirements set forth in Rule .1103 and (insert FCCH rule reference) . Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment training is available at <https://www.preventchildabusenc.org/services/trainings-and-professional-development/rrcourse>. A certificate of each staff member's completion of this course shall be maintained in the staff member's file in the center (this includes the operator of FCCH).

What is Child Maltreatment?

Child maltreatment includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

1. **Physical Abuse** – generally defined as “any non-accidental physical injury to the child.” Indicators: unexplained bruises, burns, or injuries in various stages of healing; fear of parent or caregiver; shy, passive or withdrawn; apathy; or unusual wariness of physical contact.
2. **Sexual Abuse** – any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile involving touching or non-touching, including pornography, suggestive behaviors, or suggestive comments. Indicators: exhibiting sexual behavior or knowledge that is not appropriate for the child's age, behavioral changes, and physical symptoms in the genital area.
3. **Emotional Abuse** – expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that create serious emotional or psychological damage. Indicators: anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior towards self or others.
4. **Neglect** – failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision which results in threats the child's health, safety and/or well-being. Indicators: poor hygiene, increased hunger, unattended medical needs, and injuries or incidents related to inadequate supervision.

Children may disclose information to a child care provider because they trust them and feel safe with them. How we respond after a child's disclosure has a big impact on the child. It is critical to know what questions to ask... and when to stop! When a child chooses to disclose potential maltreatment, it is important to gather only the minimum facts necessary to know what happened—and leave the rest up to investigating authorities. Do not attempt to interview the child. Remain calm, be supportive of the child, provide a safe environment, believe what the child is telling you, and do not make promises or assumptions.

It's the Law!

North Carolina laws require all persons to report suspected child maltreatment to investigating

authorities:

1. [NCGS 7B-301\(a\)](#): Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, as defined by NCGS 7B-101, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. (The NC Local DSS Directory is available [online](#).)
2. [NCGS 14-318.6\(b\)](#): Any person 18 years of age or older who knows or should have reasonably known that a juvenile has been or is the victim of a violent offense, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse under G.S. 14-318.2 shall immediately report the case of that juvenile to the appropriate local law enforcement agency in the county where juvenile resides or is found.
3. [NCGS 110-105.4\(a\)](#): Any person who has cause to suspect that a child in a child care facility has been maltreated, as defined by G.S. 110-105.3, or has died as the result of maltreatment occurring in a child care facility, shall report the case of that child to the Department. **If you suspect a child has been maltreated in a child care facility, report the information to the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-814-6300 or 1-800-859-0829.**

Bottom line: not acting on suspicions a child is experiencing maltreatment could result in a child being exposed to additional harm or even death. In fact, knowingly or willfully failing to report or preventing someone else from making a report is a class 1 misdemeanor in North Carolina per [NCGS 14-318.6\(c\)](#). You do not need prove maltreatment has occurred, and you do not need anyone's permission to file a report; you only need reasonable cause to suspect maltreatment.

Child maltreatment can have long-term effects on a child's physical, psychological, and behavioral health. Today's children are future parents, teachers, lawyers, doctors, firemen, law enforcement officers, child care providers, and other community leaders. It's up to all of us to invest in their future by promoting their well-being physically, socially, and emotionally. You can be a hero in a child's life!

Additional Resources:

[Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina](#)

[Local DSS Directory](#)

[Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in North Carolina](#)