



Child Abuse: Protecting Infants and Toddlers

Child abuse is a prevalent and significant issue in our country. In Federal Fiscal Year 2015, 9.2 out of 1,000 children in the population were victims of child abuse and neglect. Similar to statistics from previous years, 75.3 percent of the victims suffered from neglect and 17.2 were victims of physical abuse (Children’s Bureau, 2017). Additionally, “children in their first year of life had the highest rate of victimization at 24.2 per 1,000 children of the same age in the national population” (Children’s Bureau, 2017, p. x). Of the estimated 1,670 national fatalities from child abuse and neglect in 2015, almost three-quarters were children younger than 3 years (Children’s Bureau, 2017). These data point out how critical it is that caregivers in out-of-home child care settings are trained to identify and report suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect.

According to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA):

States must enforce a State law or a statewide program regarding child abuse and neglect that includes “provisions or procedures for an individual to report known and suspected instances of child abuse and neglect, including a State law for mandatory reporting by individuals required to report such instances” (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i)).

In alignment with these requirements, the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule states that:

Lead Agencies must “certify that caregivers, teachers, and directors of child care providers within the State or service area will comply with the State’s, Territory’s, or Tribe’s child abuse reporting requirements” that are required by CAPTA or other procedures and laws related to child abuse reporting in the service area (45 C.F.R. § 98.41(e), 2016).

This requirement applies to all child care providers within the State or Territory regardless of “whether or not the State explicitly identifies these persons as mandatory reporters” (81 FR 67487). Since requirements under CAPTA do not apply to Tribes or all Territories, the mandate to comply with all child abuse reporting requirements in the State, Territory, or Tribe, is of particular importance (81 FR 67487). To fulfill these reporting requirements, the Final Rule requires Lead Agencies to provide health and safety training on recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect (45 C.F.R. § 98.41(a)(1)(xi), 2016). In thinking about how to prepare child care staff to recognize and report child abuse and neglect, it may be helpful to consider States that have created a child abuse training programs. The following are examples from two States:

Iowa provides training via a Mandatory Child Abuse Training site for child care providers, nurses, social workers, teachers and their school personnel, physicians and other healthcare workers, mental health professionals, medical examiners or coroners, and law enforcement officers. This site provides information on the goals, audience, length of course, and course content. The online course, which is approximately 2 hours, consists of four sections: an introduction, abuse and neglect information, reporter and reporting information, and Department of Human Services assessment procedures. Visit <https://dhs.training-source.org/training/courses/Mandatory%20Child%20Abuse%20Reporter%20Training%20-%202015/detail>.

New York identifies mandated reporters of child abuse and maltreatment. These “mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment when, in their professional capacity, they are presented with reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment” (Mandated Reporter Resource Center, 2017b, para. 1). Child care center and school-age child care workers are two of those designated professionals. The Mandated Reporter Resource Center provides information on professionals who are mandated reporters, New



York State laws, answers to frequently asked questions, resources, an online training course, and certificates of completion for the course. The online training course is 2 hours long and provides definitions, indicators, and procedures for making reports. The format includes interactive exercises that are tailored to meet the needs of major disciplines, including child care (Mandated Reporter Resource Center, 2017a, para. 1).

References

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