Mandated Reporter Training Manual

Kids Count On You
Dear Fellow Georgian,

As educators, I know you agree that nothing is more precious to this state than our children. The care and well being of the children of Georgia is an issue that is near to my heart. We all share the responsibility for this young generation of Georgians, and even more so, for those children in abusive situations.

You are sometimes the only line of defense against child abuse- the only ones that can save these children from their suffering. These children rely on your compassion to report the suspected abuse.

When we all pay attention, when we all get involved, we will make a positive lasting impact on the well-being of the children of Georgia. Together, we will make a difference in the lives of the abused and neglected children in our communities. This is the type of community involvement that is critical, if we intend to improve child well being in Georgia.

Sonny and I appreciate your daily service to the children of Georgia.

Warmly,

Mary Perdue
First Lady of Georgia
MEMORANDUM

TO: Georgia Education Personnel
FROM: Kathy Cox
SUBJECT: Mandated Child Abuse Video and Training Manual

First Lady Mary Perdue has joined with other Georgians in our common concern about child abuse, particularly suspected abuse that goes unreported by legally mandated reporters. The law and State Board of Education rule require (and common sense dictates) that school personnel—teachers, counselors, school custodians, lunchroom workers, bus drivers, and other system employees—report suspected child abuse, whether it is physical, sexual, or emotional, to the proper authorities using the protocol developed by individual systems.

Through Mrs. Perdue’s efforts, a mandated child abuse reporter video for school personnel has been developed to accompany this training manual. These materials should be presented to all school personnel in Georgia.

It is important to note that when abuse is suspected, no in-depth investigation should be made by school personnel, and no student should ever be directly interrogated regarding the suspected abuse. The local units of Georgia’s Division of Family and Children Services (DFACS) are responsible for the investigation and will handle it in an appropriate and legal manner.

I urge all school personnel to be particularly mindful of signs that abuse is occurring or has occurred and to report any suspected abuse. Failure to do so can result in legal liability.

It is expected that all of us will become familiar with the enclosed materials and help keep Georgia’s children safe and ready to learn. If you have questions, please contact Phil Hulst, Director of the Department’s Office of Learning Support at (404) 657-2950 or by e-mail at phulst@doc.k12.ga.us.

KC/ph

An Equal Opportunity Employer
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Office of the First Lady
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- Cici Porter, songwriter and performer, for her music and her inspiration. "Perfect Crime"
  Words & music by Cici Porter
  Performed by Cici Porter
  All rights reserved
  www.wholenessproject.com
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Training Development Committee

Cathy Bitterman, BA, Field Program Specialist
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Pam Brown, M.Ed., LPC
Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

Bobbi Butler, MSW
Whitfield County School System

Liz Ferguson, MPA
Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

Donna Greeson, LCSW
Catoosa County School System

DeAlvah H. Simms, Esq.
Office of the Child Advocate for the Protection of Children

Mary Smith, Ed.S.
Family Support Council

Marilyn O. Watson, MEd., Health Education Consultant
Georgia Department of Education
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Introduction

Child maltreatment is a devastating social problem affecting millions of children and families each year in the United States. In Georgia, more than 90,000 reports were made to child protective services (CPS) in 2003 and of those reports, approximately 28,000 were confirmed as child abuse or neglect. The effects of child abuse upon the social, cognitive and emotional development of children can be far-reaching and, in many cases, irreparable. Children may suffer from serious physical injuries, neurological damage, cognitive deficits, and problems with social relationships, behavior problems, aggression, depression, and increased risk for substance abuse, poor school performance, and juvenile delinquency/adult crime. Children die each year in Georgia as a result of child abuse.

It is important to note that 20% of the reports made to CPS are screened out, and of those that are investigated, 62% are not substantiated. This means that many families and children are struggling and in need of support, but will not be receiving services through Georgia’s child protective services system. These families need to be recognized and offered other support from within their communities. These families provide us with opportunities to prevent child abuse. These children are in our schools, and the school may be the only other support system for that child outside of his or her family.

Child abuse and neglect is not caused by a single factor but by multiple factors related to the individual, family, community, and greater society.

Research indicates that neighborhood and community factors, including societal values and beliefs influence child abuse. Neighborhoods characterized by residential turnover, poverty, significant unemployment, violence, lack of accessible and effective community resources, and lack of social relationships and trust between neighbors can create high-risk environments for families already suffering from a number of stressors and risk factors. Additionally, cultural values and beliefs in the United States, including societal tolerance and promotion of violence, acceptance of corporal punishment, and the lack of social and economic support for children and families, can also impair parents’ ability to adequately nurture and protect their children.

Certain categories of personnel who interact with children are legally required to report any suspected incidents of child abuse. They are known as “Mandated Reporters.” All school personnel are mandated reporters, yet many do not know the indicators of child abuse or the proper procedures for reporting. This training curriculum is an effort to provide all Georgia’s school system personnel with information regarding indicators of abuse and the mandated reporting laws.

This material is also intended to help school personnel to recognize when to help parents and children reach out for assistance and support before child abuse occurs so that, when a child abuse report is not indicated, there is outreach to the family. Child abuse is not inevitable, it is preventable.


Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum
September 2004
Overview and Use of Materials

Designated trainers, who have attended a train-the-trainer session, should conduct this training for every school employee.

I. Allow a *minimum* of one (1) hour for a training session.

II. Suggested sequence of training:

   - Introduce statistics
   - Introduce reasons why parents abuse
   - Discuss four types of abuse
   - Show video (approximately 20 minutes)
     comments or questions regarding the video
   - Discuss disclosure
   - Review mandated reporting laws
   - Questions and Answers
   - Provide required handouts for all participants
     Indicators of Possible Child Abuse
     Types of Disclosure
     What to Do When a Child Discloses
     When You Suspect a Child is Being Abused

III. Appendices are reference materials for the trainer. All trainers and school leadership should become familiar with these materials.

IV. Additional Handouts for reproduction and distribution are in this curriculum guide.
Mandated Reporter Training Script

**Trainer’s Note**

Introduce yourself and the training. The rates of child abuse and neglect continue to increase in Georgia. As school personnel, we are connected to children and families in our community. We each play a role in recognizing, reporting and preventing child abuse.

Over the next hour we are going to discuss: child abuse statistics; reasons people abuse; definitions of abuse and physical and behavioral indicators that a child may have been abused; disclosure; mandated reporting laws; and, most importantly, the role you play in supporting families and enhancing the life of a child.

Begin by looking at the statistics. (Statistics should be updated each year. Obtain local statistics through your county DFCS office.)

Statistics on Child Abuse

**In Georgia...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse Category</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Reports</td>
<td>74,803</td>
<td>82,412</td>
<td>85,464</td>
<td>92,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiated Incidences</td>
<td>34,079</td>
<td>39,493</td>
<td>44,932</td>
<td>27,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>23,703(70%)</td>
<td>28,211(71%)</td>
<td>32,385(72%)</td>
<td>39,538(81%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>3,873(11%)</td>
<td>4,069(10%)</td>
<td>3,941(9%)</td>
<td>4,791(10%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>2,354(7%)</td>
<td>2,215(6%)</td>
<td>2,256(5%)</td>
<td>2,285(5%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>1,490(4%)</td>
<td>1,655(4%)</td>
<td>1,682(4%)</td>
<td>1,466(3%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other¹</td>
<td>2,659(8%)</td>
<td>3,343(8%)</td>
<td>4,668(10%)</td>
<td>539(1%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalities</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers are based on substantiated incidents of child abuse and neglect. The number of cases of child abuse and neglect is lower than the count of incidents of child abuse and neglect, because there may be abuse reported for several children in one case.*

- In Georgia, once every 30 minutes a child is the victim of confirmed abuse or neglect (GA Office of Child Fatality Review)
- In Georgia, 66% of child deaths related to abuse and neglect were determined to be preventable (GA Office of Child Fatality Review)
- The majority of maltreaters (83% in 2003) are the parents of the child (Georgia Department of Human Resources)

¹ Other includes drug exposure, addiction at birth, gunshot wounds, medical care needed, among others. Taken from Protective Services Data System Annual Reports, 2000-2003, Georgia Department of Human Resources.
Throughout the Nation...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse Category</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000(^2)</th>
<th>2001(^3)</th>
<th>2002(^4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Reports</td>
<td>3.2 million</td>
<td>2.9 million</td>
<td>3 million</td>
<td>2.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantiated Incidences</td>
<td>1 million</td>
<td>879,000</td>
<td>840,000</td>
<td>896,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other(^5)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatalities(^6)</td>
<td>1,396</td>
<td>1,356</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Statistics:

- Over half of all victims are under the age of seven (Office of Child Abuse and Neglect)
- 90% of adult prisoners report being abused as a child
- Over 75% of child fatalities reported as a result of child abuse and neglect occur in children under the age of four. (Office of Child Abuse and Neglect)
- The leading cause of maltreatment death is neglect. (Office of Child Abuse and Neglect)
- 73% of children who were sexually abused had their abuse last more than five years

\(^2\) Taken from Child Maltreatment 2000, US Dept. of Health and Human Services
\(^3\) Taken from Child Maltreatment 2001, National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
\(^4\) Taken from Child Maltreatment 2002, National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
\(^5\) Other includes other forms of maltreatment such as threat of harm and abandonment
\(^6\) Taken from Annual 50 States Survey National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research
Parental & Family Factors that May Lead to Child Abuse & Neglect

- **Parental / Caregiver Immaturity**
  Very young and or inexperienced parents/caregivers may not understand a child’s behaviors and needs and may not know what to expect at each stage of the child’s development.

- **Unrealistic Expectations**
  Expectations of the child are beyond what he/she is developmentally capable of performing.

- **Social Isolation**
  A lack of friends or family to help with the demands of parenting or to provide adult companionship and support for the parent/caregiver.

- **Unmet Emotional Needs**
  Parents who are not relating well to other adults may turn to their child to satisfy their need for love, acceptance, and self-esteem.

- **Frequent Crisis**
  Financial, job, marital and, legal stresses/problems as well as major illness, etc., may contribute to abuse or neglect of children.

- **Poor Childhood Experiences**
  Many abusive adults were mistreated as children and may not have learned or developed the ability to relate to children in an appropriate, nonviolent manner.

- **Drug or Alcohol Problems**
  Such problems impair parental ability to care properly for children and may expose the children to danger.

- **Mental Illness**
  Untreated and/or chronic mental illness could lead to abuse and neglect.

- **Poor Family Boundaries**
  Failure to protect a child from harm can include: unlimited access to the home by many outsiders, access to medications, dangerous objects and animals, lack of adequate supervision, etc.
**Indicators of Possible Child Abuse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Physical Indicators</th>
<th>Behavioral Indicators</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Physical      | Unexplained bruises and welts:  
- On face, lip, mouth  
- On torso, back, buttocks, thighs  
- In various stages of healing  
- Clustered, forming regular patterns  
- Imprint of article used to inflict injury (belt, electrical cord)  
- Regularly appear after absence, weekend, or vacation  
Unexplained burns:  
- Cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles of feet, palms, back, or buttocks  
- Immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like)  
Unexplained fractures/dislocations  
Baldf patches on the scalp | - Feels deserving of punishment  
- Wary of adult contact  
- Frightened of parents  
- Afraid to go home  
- Reports injury by parents  
- Self-destructive behavior  
- Withdrawn or aggressive behavioral extremes  
- Uncomfortable with physical contact  
- Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably  
- Wears clothing inappropriate for weather to cover body | See Appendix A – DFCS definitions of corporal punishment, discipline |
| Neglect       | Consistent hunger  
- Poor hygiene  
- Inappropriate dress  
- Consistent lack of supervision  
Unattended physical problems or medical needs  
- Underweight  
- Poor growth patterns  
- Failure to thrive  
- Lice, distended stomach, emaciated look | Self-destructive behaviors  
Begging, stealing food  
Extended stays at school (early arrival and late departures)  
Constant fatigue, listlessness, or falling asleep in class  
Assuming adult responsibilities and concerns  
States there is no caretaker in the home  
Frequently absent or tardy | Educational or cognitive neglect is first addressed through the school system, based on attendance policy. DFCS determines level of neglect in regards to lack of adult supervision. See Appendix B DFCS guidelines for supervision |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Physical Indicators</th>
<th>Behavioral Indicators</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>• Difficulty walking or sitting</td>
<td>• Inappropriate sex play or advanced sexual knowledge and promiscuity</td>
<td>See Appendix C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Torn, stained or bloody underclothing</td>
<td>• Hysteria, lack of emotional control</td>
<td>Healthy Sexual Development in Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pain, swelling or itching in the genital area</td>
<td>• Sudden school difficulties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pain on urination</td>
<td>• Withdrawal or depression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bruises, bleeding, or laceration in external genitalia area</td>
<td>• Excessive worrying about siblings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Presence of sexually transmitted disease</td>
<td>• Difficult peer relationships, resists involvement with peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Frequent urinary or yeast infections</td>
<td>• Self-imposed social isolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoidance of physical contact or closeness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sudden massive weight change (loss or gain)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Abuse</td>
<td>• Speech or other communicative disorder</td>
<td>• Habit disorders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delayed physical development</td>
<td>• (sucking, rocking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exacerbation of existing conditions such as asthma or allergies</td>
<td>• Antisocial or destructive behaviors, including delinquency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Substance abuse</td>
<td>• Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition to play)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavioral extremes (passivity or aggression)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Developmental delays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trainer’s Note
Introduce video: The following video illustrates the definitions of abuse, as well as physical and behavioral indicators of abuse.

At this point, show the Mandated Reporter Training Video
(This video is approximately 20 minutes long)
What to do When a Child Discloses

1. Find a private place to talk with the child

2. Reassure the child
   - I believe you.
   - I am glad you told me.
   - It is not your fault this happened.
   - (Sexual) abuse is wrong.

3. Listen openly and calmly. Try to keep your own emotions and nonverbal cues neutral.

4. Write down the facts and words as the child has stated them.

5. Report the disclosure to the designated reporter in your school/system/agency or to your local child protection agency or law enforcement entity.

6. Respect the child’s need for confidentiality – by not discussing the abuse with anyone other than those required by school/agency policy and the law.

What NOT to say When a Child Discloses

1. Ask “why” questions such as
   - “Why didn’t you stop him or her?”
   - “Why are you telling me this?”
2. “Are you sure this is happening?”
3. “Are you telling the truth?”
4. “Let me know if it happens again.”
5. “What did you do to make this happen?”

If a child does make a disclosure, don’t try to get all the details. Listen attentively and ask him/her if he/she wants to say anything else. If she chooses to say nothing more, then proceed to notify the principal as soon as possible and follow the steps outlined by your school’s policy. Also, write down the actual words used in the disclosure and your interaction with the child. This first statement made spontaneously has forensic significance to the investigators and the exact words can be important.

Above all, MINIMIZE the number of questions you ask the child and avoid the use of leading questions (questions that suggest an answer) e.g., “Did your uncle touch you in the private area too? Was he wearing a blue jacket?”

Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum
September 2004
Trainer's Note: Those children who disclose abuse may do so in a variety of ways. Some may come to you in private and disclose directly. This, unfortunately, is one of the less common ways. Following are examples of the types of disclosures children make. Most importantly, your role is to listen and reassure the child. It is not to ask probing questions or investigate.

Types of Disclosures

1. Indirect Hints
   Examples
   “My brother wouldn’t let me sleep last night.”
   “Mr. Jones wears funny underwear.”
   “My babysitter keeps bothering me.”
   “I don’t like it when my mother leaves me alone with my uncle.”

   Explanation
   A child may talk in these terms because he or she hasn’t learned more specific vocabulary, feels ashamed or embarrassed, has promised not to tell, or for a combination of those reasons.

2. Disguised Disclosure
   Examples
   “I know someone who is being touched in a bad way.”
   “What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested, but her mother did not believe her?”

   Explanation
   The child may be talking about someone he or she knows, but is just as likely to be talking about himself or herself. Encourage the child to tell you what he or she knows about the “other child.” Then ask whether something like what is being said has ever happened to him or her.

3. Disclosures with Strings Attached
   Examples
   “I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell.”

   Explanation
   Many children believe something very negative will happen if they break the secret of abuse. The child may have been threatened by the offender to ensure his or her silence. Let the child know that there are some secrets that you just can’t keep. Assure the child that your job is to protect the child and keep him/her safe. Let the child know you will keep it as confidential as possible but that you are required by law to make a report.
Trainer's Note: School personnel are required to report any indication that a child is in danger, or is a danger to himself/herself or others.

When You Suspect a Child is Being Abused

1. Report your concerns to the designated reporter in your agency/school or to a supervisor.
2. Follow up with your designated reporter to assure that a report is made to child protection services

Remember, to make a report or cause a report to be made, mandated reporters only need to have "reasonable suspicions," not direct evidence.

It is important to note that contact by the school with the parents or caretaker of the child is not recommended. It is DFCS policy that Child Protective Services notify the parent upon investigation.

When You Have Questions About

- Indicators of child abuse
- Child abuse laws in Georgia
- Child abuse survivors
- How to facilitate parent support
- Other issues related to child abuse or neglect

Call the HELPLINE at Prevent Child Abuse Georgia: 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)
Who MUST Report?

Georgia law requires all school personnel who come in contact with children to report suspected child abuse.

To Whom Do You Report?

An oral report must be made as soon as possible by telephone or in person to the DFCS office providing protective services in the county where the child lives. There is a child protection agency in each of Georgia’s 159 counties.

Each school or school system will have an internal child abuse report protocol. Know this protocol. It is strongly recommended each staff person involved receive confirmation when a report is made.

When unable to reach DFCS, or if the child is in immediate danger, a report must be made to the police or district attorney in the county where the child lives. Follow-up with your local DFCS as soon as possible to make an official report to their office.

What Information Should Your Report Contain?

- Name, age, address and current location of the child
- Name and address of the child’s parents or caretakers, if known
- Name and address of suspected perpetrator
- Location where the abuse took place, if known
- The nature and extent of the child’s injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries
- Any other information the reporter believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator

Trainer's Note: Mandated reporters who report in good faith are protected by law, even if the report is not confirmed.

Rights of the Mandated Reporter

- **Anonymity or confidentiality.** All reports are confidential, and the reporter may remain anonymous. It is, however, most helpful to the child if the reporter provides his or her contact information.

- **Knowledge of the outcome only of a report.** Mandated reporters who provide their name at the time of filing the child abuse report may request information from DFCS on the outcome of a report. Legally DFCS cannot share any information other than the outcome. Mandated reporters are supposed to receive a letter of acknowledgment, acceptance for investigation or screen-out of the case. (see Appendix D)

What are the Penalties for NOT Reporting?

Any person or official required by Georgia law to report suspected cases of child abuse and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. You may also be disciplined by your school system or lose your position.

O.C.G.A 19-7-5(h). (See Appendix E)
**Trainer's Note:** DFCS and law enforcement have all responsibility for investigation and confirmation of child abuse. It is recommended that your school develop a relationship with your local DFCS office to facilitate communication and collaboration.

**Role of Child Protective Services**

Child Protective Services will investigate cases of suspected abuse and neglect and take necessary steps to protect a child if abuse and/or neglect is “substantiated.”

To determine whether a child is being abused, DFCS has the authority to:

- Interview the child and parents/caregivers
- Arrange, with parental permission, for the medical examination of a child if the child is believed to have sustained injuries. DFCS can make such arrangements without parental permission if the child is in DFCS custody.
- Assess the parents'/caregivers' abilities to care for and protect the child.
- Provide support for services to enable parents/caregivers to care for the child.
- Request immediate temporary custody of a child from the judge in juvenile court when a report of abuse and/or neglect is substantiated.
- Petition the court for permanent custody of a child when the parents/guardians, when given support and assistance, fail to demonstrate an ability or willingness to care for the child.
What Happens When You Make a Report?

Your job as a mandated reporter is to assure that DFCS is contacted whenever you have reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected. It is the job of DFCS to accept your report and evaluate if, based on state law, it should be opened for investigation. If your report is on a family which you know already has an open case with DFCS, your current report must still be given to Child Protective Services Intake to insure proper processing of the report.

Even if your report does not result in a case being accepted for investigation, it is always best to err on the side of caution and to report your concerns. Your report may provide a key piece of information that will be helpful to DFCS' decision to open a future investigation.

Your report will be opened for investigation if DFCS finds that it contains any allegation or evidence of child maltreatment. All reports containing allegations or evidence of child abuse, including all reports screened out as inappropriate for CPS intervention, are given to law enforcement.

You will receive a written acknowledgement of your report from DFCS (see sample letter attached, appendix D). This acknowledgement should indicate whether your report was assigned for investigation.

DFCS conducts an investigation of a report to determine whether an incident of maltreatment occurred and, if substantiated, to determine the level of risk for future maltreatment to the child and to plan for the child's safety and protection.

If the report is serious, the investigation will begin immediately to within 24 hours of the receipt of the report. If the report is of a less serious nature, the investigation will begin within five work days of the receipt of the report.

All investigations include:
- An interview of any alleged maltreated child within the assigned response time (immediately to 24 hours or five workdays).
- An interview of every child living in the household.
- An interview of each parent/caretaker of the child(ren).
- A home visit to observe the interactions between the parent and the child.
- A minimum of two collateral contacts (interviews with others involved with the family).

At the conclusion of the investigation a decision will be made jointly by the investigating case manager and his or her supervisor whether or not to substantiate the report.

Mandated reporters may contact DFCS to find out whether their report was substantiated. Even if your report was not investigated or was determined not to be substantiated, it is your responsibility to report future concerns regarding the child.
Trainer's Note: Risk factors increase the likelihood of negative outcomes occurring. Protective factors are those characteristics that "buffer" individuals or families from stress or other negative influences, and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes occurring. When risk factors outweigh protective factors, negative outcomes occur. It is best to focus on simultaneously reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. Schools, and school personnel, are protective factors for children.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR PREVENTION

Children have strengths which can be built upon by the adults in their lives to increase their safety and well-being. The school, as an institution and through individual personnel, can create and build upon these protective factors in children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Community</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops close bonding with child</td>
<td>Expresses positive expectations</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for family and child to participate in community life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is nurturing and protective</td>
<td>Encourages goal setting and mastery</td>
<td>Involves youth in community services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses high warmth/low criticism parenting style (rather than authoritarian or permissive)</td>
<td>Encourages pro-social development (altruism, empathy and cooperation)</td>
<td>Provides supportive social and health networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Values and encourages education</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for leadership and participation</td>
<td>Leaders prioritize community health, safety and quality of life for families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manages stress</td>
<td>Fosters active involvement for all students (whatever their learning style or ability)</td>
<td>Provides access to resources (health care, housing, day care, job training, employment, education and recreation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes spending time with children a priority</td>
<td>Trains teachers in cooperative learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourages supportive relationships with caring adults beyond the immediate family</td>
<td>Involves parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeks professional help and support when needed</td>
<td>Staff view themselves as caring people and model pro-social behavior</td>
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APPENDICES

Appendix A  DFCS Definition of Corporal Punishment
            DFCS Definition of Discipline

Appendix B  DFCS Guidelines- Lack of Supervision

Appendix C  Healthy Sexual Development in Children

Appendix D  Mandated Reporter Letter

Appendix E  Child Abuse Reporting Law

Appendix F  Additional Resources

REQUIRED HANDOUTS

Indicators of Possible Child Abuse
Types of Disclosure
What to do When a Child Discloses

ADDITIONAL HANDOUTS

OCGA 19-7-5(h)
Child Protective Services Definitions

Corporal Punishment

This is any physical punishment of a child to inflict pain as a deterrent to wrong doing. It may produce transitory pain and potential bruising. If pain and bruising are not excessive or unduly severe and result only in short-term discomfort, this is not considered maltreatment.

Discipline

This is teaching and training a child to follow rules. It sets limits that are both age and developmentally appropriate. It incorporates structured and positive reinforcement that help children develop self control, self reliance and respect for others.
APPENDIX B

DFCS Guidelines

Lack of Supervision*

Discussion

Use the following guidelines for determining the level of neglect that exists when children are alone without adult supervision.

- Children eight years or younger should not be left alone;
- Children between the ages of nine years and twelve years, based on level of maturity, may be left alone for brief (less than two hours) periods of time; and,
- Children thirteen years and older, who are at an adequate level of maturity, may be left alone and may perform the role of babysitter, as authorized by the parent, for up to twelve hours.

(These guidelines pertain only to children who are not in the department’s custody. Situations involving children for whom the department has placement responsibility are governed by foster care requirements.)

Procedures/Practice Issues

There are sometimes circumstances where an unsupervised older child is at risk or where a younger child has the maturity level to be left alone or to care for other children. Some examples are:

- It may not be advisable to leave an older child who has a special condition or disability alone. Discuss individual case situations with the supervisor.
- Consideration may be given to a child younger than 13 years, who exhibits strong maturity skills and has participated in a course on babysitting, to be alone or to care for other children. Verify that the child participated in the skills class and discuss with the supervisor to determine if a neglectful situation exists. Suggested questions to ask are:
  - Does the child know the emergency plan for the family?
  - Does the child know the parent’s phone numbers (work and home)?
  - Can the child demonstrate the plan and recite the numbers?
  - What is the availability of the parent during this time?
  - Are there environmental factors that add further risk to the situation
  - Are there factors that reduce risk, i.e. supportive/available neighbors?

*Social Services Manual, Child Protective Chapter 2100, Section IV, Page 106, October 1999

Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum
September 2004
Healthy Sexual Development in Children

Sexual Development is a part of every human regardless of age. Below is just a partial list of common and uncommon sexual behaviors in children (adapted from Wurtele & Miller-Perrin, 1992):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pre-school (0-5 years)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Common: Sexual language relating to differences in body parts, bathroom talk, pregnancy and birth. Masturbation at home and in public. Showing and looking at private body parts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Uncommon: Discussion of sexual acts. Contact experiences with other children.</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>School Age (6-12 years)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Common: Questions about menstruation, pregnancy, sexual behavior. &quot;Experimenting&quot; with same-age children, including kissing, fondling, exhibitionism, and role-playing. Masturbation at home or other private places.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Uncommon: Use of sexual words and discussing sexual acts.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Adolescence (13-16 years)</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Common: Questions about decision-making, social relationships, and sexual customs. Masturbation in private. Experimenting between adolescents of the same age, including open-mouth kissing, fondling, and body rubbing. Also, voyeuristic behaviors. Sexual intercourse occurs in approximately one third of this age group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Uncommon: Sexual interest in much younger children.</td>
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</table>

If you recognize any of these behaviors and do not know how to talk about these issues, or you want further information, please call our Helpline toll-free at 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373). You can call and have a confidential conversation with a professional about what you are seeing, learn about local resources, and what options are available to you.

This publication was supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number U50/CCU42452-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

www.stopitnowga.org
In Georgia Call: 1 (800) CHILDREN
HOURS OF OPERATION 8 A.M. - 8 P.M. (EST) Monday - Friday
www.preventchildabusega.org
Dear

This acknowledges your report of possible child abuse and neglect, received by this office on . Thank you for your concern and for your compliance with Section 19-7-5 of the Official Code of Georgia, Annotated. We will not reveal your name to the subject of this report, however, if court action is necessary to protect the child, you may be subpoenaed to appear at the hearing. A reporter is protected from civil or criminal liability for any report made in good faith.

As a mandated reporter, you may receive the following information concerning this case at your request: whether the case investigation is on-going or completed, and if completed, whether the abuse/neglect was substantiated or unsubstantiated.

Your report was processed with the following response decision assigned. If you have any questions concerning your report or the response decision, please contact the County Department of Family and Children Services.

Sincerely,

Social Services Case Manager

☐ Assigned for Investigation
  ☐ 24 Hour
  ☐ 5 Day

☐ Not assigned for investigation
  ☐ Screened out and Referred to another agency
  ☐ Screened out

cc: DFCS
  (Name of County)
**APPENDIX E**

**Georgia Code Title List**

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**Unannotated Georgia Code - Titles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>19-7-5.</th>
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<tr>
<td>19-1</td>
<td>19-7-1</td>
<td>(a) The purpose of this Code section is to provide for the protection of children whose health and welfare are adversely affected and further threatened by the conduct of those responsible for their care and protection. It is intended that the mandatory reporting of such cases will cause the protective services of the state to be brought to bear on the situation in an effort to prevent further abuses, to protect and enhance the welfare of these children, and to preserve family life wherever possible. This Code section shall be liberally construed so as to carry out the purposes thereof.</td>
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<td>19-2</td>
<td>19-7-2</td>
<td>(b) As used in this Code section, the term:</td>
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<td>19-3</td>
<td>19-7-3</td>
<td>(1) 'Abused' means subjected to child abuse.</td>
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<td>19-4</td>
<td>19-7-4</td>
<td>(2) 'Child' means any person under 18 years of age.</td>
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<td>19-5</td>
<td>19-7-5</td>
<td>(3) &quot;Child abuse&quot; means:</td>
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<td>19-6</td>
<td>19-7-6</td>
<td>(A) Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;</td>
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<td>19-7</td>
<td>19-7-20</td>
<td>(B) Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof;</td>
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<td>19-8</td>
<td>19-7-21</td>
<td>(C) Sexual abuse of a child; or</td>
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<td>19-9</td>
<td>19-7-22</td>
<td>(D) Sexual exploitation of a child.</td>
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<td>19-10</td>
<td>19-7-23</td>
<td>However, no child who in good faith is being treated solely by spiritual means through prayer in accordance with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly accredited practitioner thereof shall, for that reason alone, be considered to be an 'abused' child.</td>
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<td>19-10A</td>
<td>19-7-24</td>
<td>(3.1) &quot;Sexual abuse&quot; means a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in any act which involves:</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-11</td>
<td>19-7-25</td>
<td>(A) Sexual intercourse, including genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex;</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-12</td>
<td>19-7-26</td>
<td>(B) Bestiality;</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-13</td>
<td>19-7-27</td>
<td>(C) Masturbation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-14</td>
<td>19-7-28</td>
<td>(D) Lewd exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of any person;</td>
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<td>19-15</td>
<td>19-7-29</td>
<td>(E) Flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude;</td>
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<td>19-7-30</td>
<td>(F) Condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained on the part of a person who is nude;</td>
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<td>19-7-48</td>
<td>(G) Physical contact in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification with any person's clothes or unclothed genitals, pubic area, or buttocks or with a</td>
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</table>

[http://www.legis.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/gl_codes_detail.pl?code=19-7-5](http://www.legis.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/gl_codes_detail.pl?code=19-7-5)  
9/23/2004
female’s clothed or unclothed breasts;

(H) Defecation or urination for the purpose of sexual stimulation; or

(I) Penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure.

'Sexual abuse' shall not include consensual sex acts involving persons of the opposite sex when the sex acts are between minors or between a minor and an adult who is not more than five years older than the minor. This provision shall not be deemed or construed to repeal any law concerning the age or capacity to consent.

(4) 'Sexual exploitation' means conduct by a child’s parent or caretaker who allows, permits, encourages, or requires that child to engage in:

(A) Prostitution, as defined in Code Section 16-6-9; or

(B) Sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct, as defined in Code Section 16-12-100.

(c)(1) The following persons having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made as provided in this Code section:

(A) Physicians licensed to practice medicine, interns, or residents;

(B) Hospital or medical personnel;

(C) Dentists;

(D) Licensed psychologists and persons participating in internships to obtain licensing pursuant to Chapter 39 of Title 43;

(E) Podiatrists;

(F) Registered professional nurses or licensed practical nurses licensed pursuant to Chapter 24 of Title 43;

(G) Professional counselors, social workers, or marriage and family therapists licensed pursuant to Chapter 10A of Title 43;

(H) School teachers;

(I) School administrators;

(J) School guidance counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, or school psychologists certified pursuant to Chapter 2 of Title 26;

(K) Child welfare agency personnel, as that agency is defined pursuant to Code Section 48-5-12;

(L) Child-counseling personnel;

(M) Child service organization personnel; or

(N) Law enforcement personnel.

If a person is required to report abuse pursuant to this subsection because that person attends to a child pursuant to such person’s duties as a member of the staff of a hospital, school, social agency, or similar facility, that person shall notify the person in charge of the facility, or the designated delegate thereof, and the person so notified shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with this Code section. A staff member who makes a report to the person designated pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have fully complied with this subsection.

(d) Any other person, other than one specified in subsection (c) of this Code section, who has reasonable cause to believe that a child is abused may report or cause reports to be made as provided in this Code section.

(e) An oral report shall be made as soon as possible by telephone or otherwise and followed by a report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney. If a report of child abuse is made to the child welfare agency or independently discovered by the agency, and the agency has reasonable cause to believe such report is true or the report contains any allegation or evidence of child abuse, then the agency shall immediately notify the appropriate police authority or district attorney. Such reports shall contain the names and addresses of the child and the child’s parents or caretakers, if known, the child’s age, the nature and extent of the child’s injuries, including any evidence of previous injuries, and any other information that the reporting person believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries and the identity of the perpetrator. Photographs of the child’s injuries to be used as documentation in support of allegations by hospital staff, physicians, law enforcement personnel, school officials, or staff of legally mandated public or private child protective agencies may be taken without the permission of the child’s parent or guardian; provided, however, that any photograph taken pursuant to this Code section shall, if reasonably possible, be taken in a manner which shall not reveal the identity of the subject. Such
photograph shall be made available as soon as possible to the chief welfare agency providing protective services and to the appropriate police authority. (f) Any person or persons, partnership, firm, corporation, association, hospital, or other entity participating in the making of a report or causing a report to be made to a child welfare agency providing protective services or to an appropriate police authority pursuant to this Code section or any other law or participating in any judicial proceeding or any other proceeding resulting therefrom shall in so doing be immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed, provided such participation pursuant to this Code section or any other law is made in good faith. Any person making a report, whether required by this Code section or not, shall be immune from liability as provided in this subsection. (g) Suspected child abuse which is required to be reported by any person pursuant to this Code section shall be reported notwithstanding that the reasonable cause to believe such abuse has occurred or is occurring is based in whole or in part upon any communication to that person which is otherwise made privileged or confidential by law. 

(h) Any person or official required by subsection (c) of this Code section to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. (i) A report of child abuse or information relating thereto and contained in such report, when provided to a law enforcement agency or district attorney pursuant to subsection (e) of this Code section or pursuant to Code Section 49-5-41, shall not be subject to public inspection under Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50 even though such report or information is contained in or part of closed records compiled for law enforcement or prosecution purposes unless: (1) There is a criminal or civil court proceeding which has been initiated based in whole or in part upon the facts regarding abuse which are alleged in the child abuse reports and the person or entity seeking to inspect such records provides clear and convincing evidence of such proceeding; or (2) The superior court in the county in which is located the office of the law enforcement agency or district attorney which compiled the records containing such reports, after application for inspection and a hearing on the issue, shall permit inspection of such records by or release of information from such records to individuals or entities who are engaged in legitimate research for educational, scientific, or public purposes and who comply with the provisions of this paragraph. When those records are located in more than one county, the application may be made to the superior court of any one of such counties. A copy of any application authorized by this paragraph shall be served on the office of the law enforcement agency or district attorney which compiled the records containing such reports. In cases where the location of the records is unknown to the applicant, the application may be made to the Superior Court of Fulton County. The superior court to which an application is made shall not grant the application unless: 

(A) The application includes a description of the proposed research project, including a specific statement of the information required, the purpose for which the project requires that information, and a methodology to assure the information is not arbitrarily sought; 

(B) The applicant carries the burden of showing the legitimacy of the research project; and 

(C) Names and addresses of individuals, other than officials, employees, or agents of agencies receiving or investigating a report of abuse which is the subject of a report, shall be deleted from any information released pursuant to this subsection unless the court determines that having the names and addresses open for review is essential to the research and the child, through his or her representative, gives permission to release the information.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You can contact the following resources for additional information on child abuse and neglect or related issues.

1. **Prevent Child Abuse Georgia**
   - Phone: 404-870-6565 in Atlanta or toll-free at 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-5336) throughout Georgia
   - Website: [www.preventchildabusega.org](http://www.preventchildabusega.org)
   (You can access HELPLINE, prevention, training and education or any other PCA Georgia service through the phone numbers listed above or by e-mail at helpline@preventchildabusega.org)

2. **Prevent Child Abuse America**
   - Phone: 312-663-3520
   - Website: [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

3. **Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, Chartered Councils**
   - Phone: 404-870-6565 in Atlanta or toll-free at 1-800-CHILDREN throughout Georgia.
   - For a contact list of chartered councils, go to [www.preventchildabusega.org](http://www.preventchildabusega.org)

4. **Family Connection Partnership**
   - Phone: 404-527-7394
   - Website: [www.georgiafamilyconnection.org](http://www.georgiafamilyconnection.org)

5. **American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)**
   - Phone: 405-271-8202
   - Website: [www.apsac.org](http://www.apsac.org)

6. **National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN)**
   - Phone: 202-205-8586
   - Website: [www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb)

7. **Family Support America**
   - Phone: 312-338-0900
   - Website: [www.frca.org](http://www.frca.org)

8. **National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence (NCCAFV)**
   - Phone: 202-429-6695
   - Website: [www.americancampaign.org](http://www.americancampaign.org)

9. **Children's Defense Fund (CDF)**
    - Phone: 202-678-8787
    - Website: [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

10. **The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome**
    - Phone: 801-627-3399
    - Website: [www.dontshake.com](http://www.dontshake.com)

11. **American Humane Association**
    - Phone: 303-792-9900
    - Website: [www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Possible Child Abuse*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Abuse</strong></td>
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<td>Physical</td>
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<td>Type of Abuse</td>
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<td><strong>Emotional</strong></td>
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Types of Disclosures

1. **Indirect Hints**
   **Examples**
   - "My brother wouldn’t let me sleep last night."
   - "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear."
   - "My babysitter keeps bothering me."
   - "I don’t like it when my mother leaves me alone with my uncle."

   **Explanation**
   A child may talk in these terms because he or she hasn’t learned more specific vocabulary, feels ashamed or embarrassed, has promised not to tell, or for a combination of those reasons.

2. **Disguised Disclosure**
   **Examples**
   - "I know someone who is being touched in a bad way."
   - "What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested, but her mother did not believe her?"

   **Explanation**
   The child may be talking about someone she or he knows, but is just as likely to be talking about himself or herself. Encourage the child to tell you what he or she knows about the “other child.” Then ask whether something like what is being said has ever happened to him or her.

3. **Disclosures with Strings Attached**
   **Examples**
   - "I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell."

   **Explanation**
   Many children believe something very negative will happen if they break the secret of abuse. The child may have been threatened by the offender to ensure his or her silence. Let the child know that there are some secrets that you just can’t keep. Assure the child that your job is to protect the child and keep him/her safe. Let the child know you will keep it as confidential as possible but that you are required by law to make a report."
What to do When a Child Discloses

1. Find a private place to talk with the child

2. Reassure the child
   I believe you.
   I am glad you told me.
   It is not your fault; this happened.
   (Sexual) abuse is wrong.

3. Listen openly and calmly. Try to keep your own emotions and nonverbal cues neutral.

4. Write down the facts and words as the child has stated them.

5. Report the disclosure to the designated reporter in your school/system/agency or your local child protection agency or law enforcement entity.

6. Respect the child’s need for confidentiality — by not discussing the abuse with anyone other than those required by school/agency policy and the law.

What NOT to say When a Child Discloses

1. Ask “why” questions such as
   “Why didn’t you stop him or her?”
   “Why are you telling me this?”

2. “Are you sure this is happening?”

3. “Are you telling the truth?”

4. “Let me know if it happens again.”

5. “What did you do to make this happen?”

If a child does make a disclosure, don’t try to get all the details. Listen attentively and ask him/her if he/she wants to say anything else. If she chooses to say nothing more, then proceed to notify the principal as soon as possible and follow the steps outlined by your school’s policy. Also, write down the actual words used in the disclosure and your interaction with the child. This first statement made spontaneously has forensic significance to the investigators and the exact words can be important.

Above all, MINIMIZE the number of questions you ask the child and avoid the use of leading questions (questions that suggest an answer) e.g., “Did your uncle touch you in the private area too? Was he wearing a blue jacket?”
When You Suspect a Child is Being Abused

1. Report your concerns to the designated reporter in your agency/school or to a supervisor.
2. Follow up with your designated reporter to assure that a report is made to child protection services.

Remember, to make a report or cause a report to be made, mandated reporters only need to have “reasonable suspicions,” not direct evidence.

It is important to note that contact by the school with the parents or caretaker of the child is not recommended. It is DFCS policy that Child Protective Services notify the parent upon investigation.

When You Have Questions About

- Indicators of child abuse
- Child abuse laws in Georgia
- Child abuse survivors
- How to facilitate parent support
- Other issues related to child abuse or neglect

Call the HELPLINE at Prevent Child Abuse Georgia: 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)
20 ways that **Schools** can help Prevent Child Abuse

1. Have clear and consistent codes of conduct.
2. Be a positive, accessible role model to children.
3. If a child is in imminent danger, call the police.
4. Make sure all staff and volunteers know how to recognize signs of child abuse.
5. Make sure all staff and volunteers know and follow the school's procedure for reporting abuse.
6. Continue to stay involved after a report is made by monitoring the child's progress both academically and emotionally.
8. Select and facilitate child abuse prevention and personal safety programs in your school.
9. Work together with the community to put family support systems in place so that child abuse can be prevented.
10. Be aware of parental actions and attitudes. Are parents concerned about their child? Are they overly aggressive or defensive in any way that relates to their child? Do they or their child fail to participate in school?
11. Encourage children to communicate openly with the school's faculty and counselors by providing a comfortable and confidential environment.
12. Help children improve their self-image and teach them constructive methods of expressing their emotions.
13. Sponsor a school-wide essay competition that pertains to child safety. This is an easy and effective way to test a child's knowledge about safety.
14. Be alert to the warning signs of abuse and neglect, particularly frequent injuries.
15. Create an environment of tolerance and inclusiveness.
16. Use teaching styles that promote assertiveness, decision-making skills, peer relations and self-esteem (encourage a variety of solutions and viewpoints.)
17. Send positive feedback to parents about their children.
18. Educate and invite parents to have roles within the school, such as volunteers, monitors, etc.
19. Set realistic goals for students and celebrate their small successes.
20. Look for opportunities to send empathetic responses to classroom situations (create opportunities for students to send congratulatory or condolence letters to classmates.)

**Prevent Child Abuse**

Georgia

1-866-CHILDREN - www.preventchildabusega.org
CHILDREN AND THE INTERNET

When used properly, the Internet can be a wonderful learning and entertainment tool for you and your family. In many ways, the virtual world of the Internet is like that of the real world. Similar safety rules apply: Don't go anywhere with a stranger. People are not always what they appear or claim to be. Before allowing your children online, discuss safety issues with them. Talk to them about your concerns and together set up family guidelines for computer use.

Help your children to understand why it is important that they do not give our personal information, even if their new e-mail pal seems to be real friendly or a fun website offers them a free gift for the information.

Find out if your Internet Service Provider (e.g., America Online, Mindspring) has built in parental controls. Become familiar with what Internet features you can and cannot control while your child is online.

Let your children know that they can come to you if they are receiving messages that make them feel uncomfortable. Tell them that in such an event, they should save the messages for you to read and handle in an appropriate manner.

Set up guidelines that deal specifically with meeting people on the Internet. Talk to your children about what to do if their new Internet friend asks to see them in person or wants them to send pictures of themselves.

Teach your children good "netiquette" (etiquette on the Internet) so that they feel more comfortable and won't accidentally offend someone. For example, USING ALL CAPS is the equivalent of yelling or screaming. _underscoring_ before and after a word indicates emphasis in the same way as bold or italic.

Keep the computer in a high traffic part of the house such as the living room. This will enable you to monitor your children's activities without making them feel as if you are watching over their shoulders all the time.

Take the time to find web sites you think your children will enjoy and "bookmark" them. This will help direct your children away from using search engines where they might find inappropriate sites (you'd be surprised at what a simple search such as "games" can turn up).

Most importantly, spend time with your children talking about their experiences online. Give them a chance to show you what they have learned, their favorite sites and topics.

Many of these safety issues are further discussed on various web sites. Use search engines (www.yahoo.com or www.hotbot.com, for example) to find more information regarding safety on the Internet for further reference. By taking appropriate precautions, you and your family can explore and enjoy the many wonderful features of the Internet.

Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia

Provided by Prevent Child Abuse Georgia
1-(800)-CHILDREN - www.preventchildabusega.org
11 Tips for Keeping Your Child Safe

- Make sure your child always knows how to reach you or another responsible adult.
- Teach your child his name, address, telephone number, and those of his school, relatives, and family friends.
- Know the adults and children your child spends time with, and know your child’s whereabouts and activities.
- Interview all potential babysitters and ask for references.
- Assure that your child’s schools and activities always provide adequate adult supervision.
- If your child babysits, arrange for transportation and know the families for whom he sits.
- Don’t display your child’s first name in highly visible places such as on his clothing.
- Limit the time your child spends on a computer and keep computers with Internet access in common areas.
- Keep guns out of your home.
- Listen to your child. Believe him if he tells you the words or actions of another individual have made him uncomfortable.

If you suspect a child is being abused, call your local child protective services office or the local police. For information on child safety issues, call the PCA Georgia Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373) or visit www.preventchildabusega.org.

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

1720 Peachtree Street, NW Suite 600 • Atlanta, Georgia 30309
1.800.CHILDREN • www.preventchildabusega.org
Coping Tips for Parents & Caregivers

There is no magic formula to taking care of children. Just when you feel you understand your two-year-old, she will turn three, and you will feel like you are starting all over. This is natural...but challenging! When your nerves are wearing thin, try one of these simple tips.

• Put Your Hands Behind Your Back.
This will help prevent you from using them to threaten or hit the child.

• Take a Deep Breath.
Count to 10. Imagine that with each deep breath, you are letting out your anger.

• Take a Break.
Ask someone you trust to relieve you for a few minutes and take a walk or get away for a short time.

• Remove Yourself from the Room.
If you can’t leave where you are, get someone to watch the child/children and go into a separate room for at least three minutes and try to cool off.

• Call a Friend, Family Member, or Support Line.
Talk to someone about your situation. Prevent Child Abuse Georgia’s Helpline can be reached toll-free at 1-(800)-CHILDREN.

• Write It Out.
Take a pen and paper and write everything that comes into your head. Crumple it up and throw it away.

• Release Pent-Up Energy.
Do 15 jumping jacks, or run up and down a set of stairs. Be careful, and do not do this if you feel it will frighten your child.

Call 1-(800)-CHILDREN for more information or to talk confidentially to a counselor.
Or visit us on the web at www.preventchildabusega.org

Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia
PLEASE, MOM AND DAD...

MY HANDS ARE SMALL—I DON'T MEAN TO SPILL MY MILK.

MY LEGS ARE SHORT—PLEASE SLOW DOWN SO I CAN KEEP UP WITH YOU.

DON'T SLAP MY HANDS WHEN I TOUCH SOMETHING BRIGHT AND PRETTY—I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

PLEASE LOOK AT ME WHEN I TALK TO YOU—IT LETS ME KNOW YOU ARE REALLY LISTENING.

MY FEELINGS ARE TENDER—DON'T NAG ME ALL DAY—LET ME MAKE MISTAKES WITHOUT FEELING STUPID.

DON'T EXPECT THE BED I MAKE OR THE PICTURE I DRAW TO BE PERFECT—JUST LOVE ME FOR TRYING.

REMEMBER I AM A CHILD NOT A SMALL ADULT—SOMETIMES I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE SAYING.

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH—PLEASE LOVE ME JUST FOR BEING ME—NOT JUST FOR THE THINGS I CAN DO.

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© J.L. RICHARDSON 1986
Being a parent is one of the toughest jobs in the world...

You're on call 24 hours a day. You're supposed to have unlimited patience and wisdom...even when you're struggling with everyday problems like money, sickness, and marital stress.

We all want to be great parents to our children 100% of the time, yet no one can, and no one ever has. Maybe that's why there is so much frustration in parenting...and you may sometimes feel that you are all alone.

If you need someone to talk to, call our toll free Helpline.

HELPLINE 1-800-CHILDREN

It's there to use from 8am to 8pm, Monday through Friday. It's free and it's confidential, so don't hesitate.

Remember, being a parent isn't easy... but you're not alone. If you need help, call today.
Bullying: Not Just a Part of Growing up!

What is Bullying?
- It is aggressive behavior or intentional "harmdoing".
- It is carried out repeatedly and over time.
- It occurs within an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power.

How Common is Bullying?
30 percent of students in grades six through ten are involved in moderate or frequent bullying – as bullies, victims, or both. 19 percent participate in bullying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warning signs of Targets:</th>
<th>Warning signs of Bullies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have poor social and interpersonal skills.</td>
<td>Control others through verbal threats or physical actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feel inadequate or have low self-esteem.</td>
<td>More prone to anger or use of force.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Believe they can't control their environment.</td>
<td>Possess little empathy for the target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are physically younger, weaker, or smaller.</td>
<td>Have often been exposed to aggressive behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have family members who are overly-involved in their decisions and activities.</td>
<td>Tease others in a malicious way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are repeatedly teased, picked on, pushed, or have unexplained bruises, torn clothing, or stolen/damaged property.</td>
<td>Influence others to do the bullying while they watch from the sidelines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are often alone or excluded from peers.</td>
<td>See aggression as the only way to preserve their self-image.</td>
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Tips On How to Protect Children From Bullying:
- **Get to know your child's teacher, school counselor and principal.** Understand the bullying policies at school and work together to ensure they are being properly enforced.
- **Help your child develop healthy friendships.** There is safety in numbers and bullies are less likely to pick on children who have a network of friends.
- **Teach your children that violence is unacceptable.** Since 60 percent of children are witnesses to bullying, they play a critical role in influencing the behavior of other children and helping victims. Parents can be role models in fostering value systems that do not tolerate violence.
- **Teach them how to report abuse.** Provide a list of names and numbers including Prevent Child Abuse Georgia's 1-800-CHILDREN and the School Safety Hotline 1-800-SAY-STOP.
Empathy

I-800-CHILDREN

One way parents and caretakers can help build children’s resistance to violence and negative social behaviors is to help them to develop EMPATHY.

What is empathy?

• Empathy is the ability to relate to another person’s feelings.
• Empathy means putting yourself in another person’s place and feeling his or her feelings.
• Empathy is caring about the other person’s feelings, even if you disagree with them.

Why is empathy important?

• Being empathic to another person shows them that we really care.
• Children who are empathic are less likely to act aggressively or violently.
• Empathy builds healthy relationships.

How does empathy develop in children?

• Around eight months, an infant begins to develop a sense that other people can and will share in his or her feelings.
• Around 12 months, a child feels distress when another child falls or cries.
• After age 1, a child becomes more aware that they are distinct from others and try to soothe another crying child.
• Around age 2, children begin to realize that someone else’s feelings differ from their own and become more sensitive to cues revealing what another child feels (facial expressions, body language, etc.).
• In late childhood, children can understand another person’s feelings beyond the immediate situation. (Example: My friend gets really quiet when her mother yells at her.)

How can parents & caregivers help children develop empathy?

• Help your child identify and appropriately express his/her own feelings. (Example: I know that you are feeling angry, but it is not okay to hurt your friend. You must use your words when you are angry.)
• Help children identify and understand the feelings of others. (Example: The boy in the story has a very sad face. Why do you think he is sad?)
• Children learn empathy by seeing how adults react to their feelings. If they are empathized with when they are sad, mad or scared, they will learn through role modeling to respond to others in the same way.
• Children learn empathy when discipline calls attention to the distress their misbehavior caused. (Example: When you pushed your friend, she was hurt and felt sad.)
• Listen to your child at least 10 minutes each day without any distractions. Maintain eye contact with your child while he/she is talking.
Resilience is the capacity to successfully adapt in the face of adverse/traumatic life situations. Research shows that resilient children usually have a sense of worth, a sense of power, a sense of hope, a sense of virtue, and a sense of competence. Children need positive attachments, nurturing relationships, and love for healthy emotional development and, ideally, these should be provided by parents. However, the presence of at least one caring adult may enable a child to develop the ability to rebound from adversity.

Fostering resilience in children is everybody’s job and can be accomplished through consistent, simple, everyday acts of kindness and support. Special efforts are not usually necessary. We must all learn how to recognize and use "Teachable Moments," the unplanned opportunities for learning.

What Parents Can Do
Demonstrate a high level of love by giving hugs and saying positive words.
Inquire about your child’s thoughts and feelings, but also recognize a need for space.
Make your home a communication-friendly environment: if possible have family dinners where one topic is discussed and let children have input in the conversation.
Provide opportunities for your children to spend time with other responsible adults they respect and admire, and with whom they can communicate.
Help your children succeed in school by talking to their teachers and reviewing their educational material.
Establish consistent rules and standards of behavior.
Provide a positive home environment & peer-friendly environment.
Invite the children’s friends to the home and get to know their parents.
Allow and encourage your children to be involved in extracurricular, community and/or church related activities.
Model empathy and charity to promote positive values (Examples: Volunteer with your child at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, or other service areas; Model condolence and/or congratulatory calls).
Teach your children assertiveness skills, decision-making skills, and positive social skills.
Foster hope and high self-esteem (Example: Encourage children to try new things and reward efforts, not just results).
Help children find positive lessons, even when their efforts are unsuccessful.

What Educators & Child Caregivers Can Do
Educate and invite parents to have roles within the schools, such as volunteers, monitors, etc.
Send positive feedback to parents about their children.
Be a positive, accessible role model to students.
Help provide a youth friendly school climate through youth-owned activities (Examples: Develop peer mediation programs; participate in yearly service projects; develop a new student welcoming committee).
Have clear and consistent codes of conduct.
Provide opportunities for youth to be involved in school-related extracurricular activities.
Plan a student volunteer project to raise charitable awareness.
Use teaching styles that promote assertiveness, decision-making skills, peer relations and self-esteem (Examples: Facilitate student-led discussions; utilize flexibility and value student input; encourage a variety of solutions and viewpoints).
Instill a sense of hope by encouraging & supporting students in pursuing their dreams.
Set realistic goals & celebrate small successes.
Look for opportunities to provide empathetic responses to classroom situations (Example: Send congratulatory or conciliation letters to classmates).
Create an environment of tolerance and inclusiveness.

What the Community Can Do
Support affordable community-based activities.
Mentor a child.
Model empathic behaviors and responses.
Take time to speak and listen to a child near you.
Take time to learn from a child.
Encourage community policies that acknowledge differences and celebrate diversity.

Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia
1720 Peachtree Street, Ste 625 • Atlanta, GA 30309
RAISING YOUR VOICE WON'T RAISE YOUR CHILD'S GRADES

But, taking a few minutes to read these important tips is a step in the right direction.

Understanding is the most important grade for parents and students alike. Keep these few tips in mind while working together at report card time...

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- Think positively. You are a special person. Be proud of what you were able to do; work to improve areas you think can be better.
- Make a plan. How do I improve areas that I think are weak?
- Ask for help...It's okay. Your teachers and parents will understand.
- Try your best. That's the most important ingredient to success.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Praise your child. Find at least one good thing about the report card...attendance, no tardies, conduct, etc.
- Be calm. Let your child tell you about his/her grades.
- Ask how you can help your child do better.
- Make a plan with your child's teacher. Ask for advice on other places in your community that can help.

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