

Conrad Weiser Community Organization

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

ALL volunteers of any Member Youth Program in the Conrad Weiser Community Association (CWCA) are considered mandated reporters, under this Act.

Volunteers are required to report suspicions of child abuse/neglect in one of the following ways:

1. Discuss suspicions with the Board Members of their Member Youth Program who will make all reports on suspected child abuse/neglect on behalf of the Member Youth Program to Berks County Children and Youth
2. Make a report of suspected child abuse/neglect on behalf of themselves to Berks County Children and Youth.

The volunteers of CWCA are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report, under the Act. Mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at CWCA take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

GUIDELINES ON CHILD ABUSE

The following pages contain information relating to child abuse. It is extremely important to make yourself familiar with the information, especially the parts pertaining to the characteristics of battered children and the indicators of child neglect.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BATTERED CHILDREN

Abused children endure life as if they are alone in a dangerous world, with no real hope of safety. Feeling unprotected, an abused child tries to protect himself in all the ways he can.

When a child has been injured and is brought for treatment, the child usually appears to:

Have no close feelings or affect with parents or other people.

Be fearful. Be quiet.

Show no reaction to pain or expectation of being comforted.

Having had violent physical contact with adults in the past, the child is often:

Wary of physical contact initiated by an adult.

When admitted to a hospital ward, the battered child:

Seems less afraid than other children and settles in quickly.

When other children cry, the battered child:

Becomes apprehensive and watches them with curiosity.

The battered child will also become:

Apprehensive when an adult approaches the crying child.

While in a new situation, the child:

Seeks safety in sizing up the situation and being alert for danger.

Children who have been battered do not behave as typical children do.

They display many adult-like reactions.

INDICATORS OF CHILD NEGLECT

There are various characteristics that can describe child neglect in general, but for clarity, neglect can be divided into two subgroups: physical and emotional neglect. These two aspects contribute to each other and rarely occur separately. The following are characteristics that may indicate physical neglect:

1. *Malnourished*
2. *Ill-clad or dirty*
3. *Overcrowded or unhealthy sleeping arrangements*
4. *Receiving inadequate supervision*
5. *Totally unsupervised*

Many of the above mentioned characteristics are also indicative of emotional neglect, along with the following:

1. *An insecure child, seemingly withdrawn or over aggressive*
2. *Failure to attend school regularly*
3. *Constant friction in the home*
4. *Exposure to unwholesome and demoralizing circumstances*
5. *Denied normal nurturance*

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Department of Welfare's ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313.

IMMUNITY FROM CIVIL OR CRIMINAL LIABILITY AND/OR EMPLOYMENT ACTION:

Any person who reports abuse or neglect, pursuant to the law or testifies in a child abuse hearing resulting from such a report, is immune from any criminal or civil liability as a result of such action. As mandated reporters, volunteers of CWCA cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Further, the volunteer is immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for reporting under the Child Protective Services Act unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO REPORT

Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect, pursuant to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law is a disorderly person and subject to a fine of up to \$500.00 or up to six months imprisonment or both.

I, _____ understand that as a volunteer for _____
(Print Volunteers Name) *(Member Youth Program)*

or the Conrad Weiser Community Association, I am considered a mandated reporter under the Child Protective Services Act. I understand that the above information is just to inform me of this act and if I need more information I should visit the following website www.preventchildabusepa.org

(Volunteers Signature)

(Date)