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**General Information:** The SUU Head Start incident reporting policy is a system designed to protect SUU Head Start children, families, staff and volunteers. Through these reports we learn of unsafe areas, children that may need immediate assistance, practices needed or needing revision, training needs, and the many good things going on at Head Start. The incident reporting policy is also a protection to Head Start staff and Southern Utah University for liability.

1. Head Start staff, parents and volunteers are to follow incident action and reporting policies listed below for any of the following observed during working hours:
  - a. Accident
  - b. Indication of child illness
  - c. Need for clothing change
  - d. Symptoms of child abuse or neglect
  - e. Child behavior episodes
  - f. An incident of violence with children.
  - g. Atypical (unusual) behavior or inappropriate language by children.
  - h. Concerns regarding a child's physical or emotional health.
  - i. Threats made or violence perpetrated by adults.
  - j. Unsafe practices (driving, lack of supervision etc.)
  - k. Atypical (unusual) behavior or inappropriate language by adults.
  - l. Harassment or Discrimination
  - m. Conflicts or concerns raised by community members, parents or staff.
  - n. Violations of Code of Conduct, including confidentiality
  - o. A "BRAVO" for something unusually well done by a child, a parent, a volunteer or a staff member.
  
2. Incidents involving children may be observed in class, on the playground, on the bus, on a field trip, etc.
  
3. If a staff member is engaging in improper, unsafe, or disrespectful behavior or language on the job, the other staff member or a classroom volunteer should complete an incident report form.
  
4. Staff members will report suspected or observed child abuse or neglect in accordance with Utah State law. The purposes of Utah State Child Abuse Reporting Laws are to: Protect the child, provide support/rehabilitative services to the family, to initiate prompt investigations, and to keep families intact. Abuse can include but is not limited to: Physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, medical neglect, and emotional abuse.
  
5. Staff will complete incident reports as noted below. Employees failing to complete/return incident reports as required will be subject to disciplinary procedures as described in the SUU Head Start Code of Conduct.

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- 1) **CHILD ACCIDENT, INJURY OR ILLNESS:** When an incident occurs which affects a child, **take care of the child first.** The health and welfare of that child are priority. Call 911 or your emergency number if, in your judgment, medical assistance is necessary. Ensure that the other Head Start children are safe. **For suspected abuse or neglect, go directly to #2.**
  - a) **Accidents with Possible Serious Injuries:** If the accident or illness is serious (possible broken bones, stitches needed, seizure, contagious illness etc.):
    - i) Take care of the child. Follow posted emergency procedures.
    - ii) Call 911 if emergency assistance is needed.
    - iii) Notify the parents. If unavailable notify the emergency contact.
    - iv) Notify the Central Office once the child has been cared for and the parents notified. Call the director or acting director with these incident reports the day of the incident or observation.
    - v) Complete the incident report form. Fax a copy to the Central Office immediately, send one copy home to the parents, and keep the original in your files unless otherwise instructed.
  - b) **Accidents with Moderate Injuries:** For moderate injuries (Any blood present, any other bodily fluids present, bumped head, a child complains of pain, possible sprain, etc.):
    - i) Take care of the child. Follow emergency procedures as posted.
    - ii) Call the parents and explain the situation. If you feel the child's condition warrants it, ask them to come and pick up the child.
    - iii) Complete incident report form and fax one copy to Central Office by the end of the work day and keep one in your file. Send a copy of the Incident Report home to the parent.
  - c) **Accidents with Minor Injury:** For accidents with minor injury, such as a scrape with no blood or bodily fluids:
    - i) Take care of the child.
    - ii) An incident report does not need to be filled out. However, please tell the parents or send a note home if in your judgment it is necessary.
  - d) **Illness:** If a child becomes ill at school, Care for the child and keep the child away from other children. Notify the parents or care givers to come and pick up the child. Complete the incident report form. Fax a copy to the Central Office by the end of the workday and keep the original in your files.
  - e) **Other Child Incidents such as a nosebleed, accidents in pants etc. (Not considered an accident, illness, suspected abuse or behavior):**
    - i) Care for the child.
    - ii) If blood or other bodily fluids are involved, notify parents *directly* by phone or in person and document this contact.
    - iii) Complete the incident report form. Fax a copy to Central Office by the end of the work day and keep the original in your files. Send a copy of the report home to the parents.

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1. **SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT:**

If staff members note signs of possible abuse or neglect, take these steps:

- a. Do all you can to help the child feel safe and secure. If a child appears to be injured, call for medical assistance if necessary.
- b. Call the Utah State Government, Human Services Department, Division of Child and Family Services, Office of Child Protective Services in your community. State law requires the person witnessing the signs of abuse to be the one who reports.
- c. Notify the Family and Community Partnerships Manager that you have made a suspected abuse or neglect referral. If the Family/Community Partnerships Manager is unavailable, call the Director, the Assistant Director or Acting Director.
- d. Make a written incident report. FAX one copy to the Family/Comm Partnerships Manager and keep one copy. Do not send a copy of the incident report **home, unless otherwise directed.**
- e. A Child Protective Services (CPS) staff member may contact you for additional information. Do not give any information out over the phone and check identification before giving information in person. **If possible**, contact the Family/ Community Partnerships Manager, the Director or Acting Director before CPS staff interview a child or take other action during school hours.
- f. Any child interviewed at Head Start is to be accompanied by a Head Start staff member. This is SUU Head Start Policy and is allowed by Utah State Law. [The staff member is not to participate in the interview or “coach” the child through facial expressions, body language or in words.] If the parent of the child whom Child Protective Services is investigating is in the classroom when the CPS worker comes for an interview or to get further information, ask the CPS worker to come back when the parent is not present.
- g. If you see or hear something that leads you to believe that a child may be in an abusive situation, begin documenting observations on a separate sheet of the Family Log. Alert the Family/Community Partnerships Manager to the situation and for suggestions. Any errors in reporting should be on the side of protecting the children. If you see a pattern, follow procedures “b-e” above.
- h. If you have questions, call the Family/Community Partnerships Manager or the Director at the Central Office.

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2. **CHILD BEHAVIOR REPORTING:** If an incident involves a Head Start child's behavior (such as an incident of violence, unusual behavior, behavior with age inappropriate sexual overtones or inappropriate language by children), follow the procedures below.
- a. If another child is injured or frightened, comfort and care for that child. Complete an incident report form for that child and notify the parent of the child who was injured or otherwise involved by phone or in person of the incident. If you are unable to talk to them, document your attempt to notify and send a confidential note home in a **sealed envelope** with the child.
  - b. Try to calm and redirect the child who is acting out.
  - c. Notify the parent of the child who initiated the behavioral incident in person or by phone of the incident and ask for their input. If you are unable to talk to them in person or by phone, send a note home in a **sealed envelope** with the child.  
**[Note:** If you are concerned that a child may be experiencing abuse at home, consult with the Family/Community Partnerships Manager before contacting the family.]
  - d. During planning time:
    - i. Complete the incident report form. In the "description of the incident" section, describe the incident and state what you believe caused the incident (environment, risk factors, etc.) Write on the incident report form whether immediate follow up from the staffing team is necessary.
    - ii. Fax the form to the attention of the Child Services Manager.
    - iii. If immediate follow-up is not required, make adjustments; continue observing the child's behavior, and report progress to the Child Development Coordinator.
    - iv. If immediate follow-up is necessary, fill out the OPTIONS form listing the presenting problem (which can come directly from your incident report), risk and protective factors as you see them, and possible solutions.
    - v. Schedule with the Child Services Manager to have this child discussed at the next child staffing meeting.

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**3. CHILD STAFFING OPTIONS® PROGRAM**

- a. Teachers join OPTIONS staffing meetings held in their geographic area as a member of the staffing team. Other members of the staffing team can include: Director and/or Assistant Director, Child Development Coordinators, Health Manager, FCP Manager, Mental Health Assistant, Disabilities Specialist, secretarial support, and other staff / consultants as needed.
- b. Teachers will come prepared with their best guess of risk and protective factors and possible solutions.

**4. CONCERNS REGARDING CHILDRENS PHYSICAL OR DENTAL HEALTH**

- a. In order to identify any new or recurring medical and dental concerns, staff will observe children through indoor and outdoor activities.
- b. If staff observe any physical changes in a child, the Family Advocate will contact parents by phone or in person for their input and evaluation. This contact is to be documented in the Family Log.
- c. Staff will use the “concerns” section of the incident report form to report any physical changes in a child. Fax or give a copy of the report to your Child Services Manager. If appropriate, send a copy home to the parents.
- d. The Child Services Manager will direct copies of incident reports to the appropriate coordinator and to other appropriate staff as soon as possible. All Child Services staff reviews incident reports as the conclusion of the weekly enrollment staffing meeting. Further referrals for services will be made as necessary.

**5. CONCERNS REGARDING ADULTS:**

- a. For threats made or violence perpetrated by adults, go directly to the Policy on Threats (ESP 4). Continue with steps outlined in that Policy.
- b. For conflicts or concerns (Hrm11), violations of Code of Conduct (HRM 2), (including confidentiality) and parent or community member complaints (HRM12), continue with steps outlined in that policy.
- c. If a parent or other family member uses language that is demeaning to any child in

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their care, try to redirect the person and model positive language. Fill out the “**concern**” section of the incident report form and fax it to the attention of the Child Services Manager.

- d. With other adult incidents such as unsafe practices, atypical behavior (including being impaired by drugs or alcohol), and inappropriate language, Take action, if necessary, to protect the children, volunteers and other staff. If a parent appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol when picking up their own child, try to talk the parent out of driving in an impaired state. Children, other than their own, will not be allowed to go with a parent who appears to be impaired. If the parent insists on driving with their child, call the police as soon as they leave the building. Try to get a description and license number of the vehicle. Complete a written incident report form and fax it to the Director the day of the occurrence.
- e. To protect Head Start children, fill out a report if something concerns you but does not fit into any of the categories above. Call your supervisor if you have questions. Complete the written incident report form and have it signed by witnesses if the incident occurred at Head Start. Add more detail on the back or on an additional sheet if necessary.

## 6. BRAVO! THINGS WORTH SHOUTING ABOUT!

- a. The “**Bravo**” section of the incident report form is to list **positive things** about a child, a family, a volunteer or a staff member. Share your good news too. With permission, we will put the information in the staff newsletter.
- b. A BRAVO incident can also be written up and placed in the child’s portfolio or sent home. Nearly everyone loves hearing positive things about their child.