

## Mandated Reporter Handouts

Section 19-7-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to reporting of child abuse, designated several categories of individuals as mandated reporters, who "having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made." All child service organization personnel are mandated reporters. (The complete section of the Georgia Code is on file at your school)

Child service organization personnel' means persons employed by or volunteering at a business or an organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children.

- O.C.G.A. 19-7-5(b)(5)

### Physical Abuse

The non-accidental physical injury of a child. Physical abuse is the most visible and widely recognized form of child abuse.

*In Georgia, Corporal Punishment is legal. Abuse is not. Corporal punishment is any physical punishment of a child to inflict pain as a deterrent to wrongdoing. 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.*

-Georgia DFCS

### Neglect

The failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may be:

- The failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs, including safety from harm or danger (failure to protect).
- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision this also includes the failure to protect a child from harm/danger.)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Educational (e.g. failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)

### Child Protective Services guidelines for 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 assume that the child's age is equivalent with his or her developmental level. A child's maturity should ALWAYS factor into how much supervision is needed.

### Sexual Abuse

The exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Sexual abuse is most commonly perpetrated by an individual known to the victim, rarely is the offender a stranger. One-third of all sexual abuse is perpetrated by another child.

Sexual abuse includes touching offenses: fondling, sodomy, rape; and non-touching offenses: child prostitution, indecent exposure and exhibitionism, utilizing the internet as a vehicle for exploitation.

### **Commercial Sexual Exploitation Of Children**

The buying, selling or trading of sex acts with a child. If you suspect a child is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, please contact the Georgia Care Connection Office at 404-602-0068. This does happen even in Calhoun.

\*Calling the GCCO links the family to supportive services but does not fulfill mandatory reporting of child sexual exploitation as required by Senate Bill 69.

### **INDICATORS**

- Branding or tattooing: victims branded by their pimp with tattoos that include a male name or initials, street name, gang or money symbols; these are often found on legs, neck, chest, hands or arms (this is one of the ways that pimps maintain physical and psychological control over emotionally vulnerable girls)
- An older boyfriend or male friend or relative
- Withdrawn and uncommunicative
- Possession of large amounts of money (girls turn money over to the pimp)
- Poor personal hygiene and/or inappropriate dress
- Runaway or lack of adult supervision/support

### **Emotional Abuse**

A pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. It frequently occurs as verbal abuse, but can also include the following: rejection, terrorizing, shameful forms of punishment, withholding physical and emotional contact; developmentally inappropriate expectations.

### **Disclosures**

When a child tells you that he or she has been abused, i.e. makes a disclosure, you should always take the statement seriously, regardless of how credible the child's statement seems.

1. Indirect Hints
  - a. Examples: "my brother wouldn't let me sleep last night."
  - b. "There was no one home to help me with my homework."
  - c. "My babysitter keeps bothering me."
  - d. "I don't like it when my mother leaves me alone with my uncle."
2. Disguised Disclosure
  - a. "I know someone who is being touched in a bad way."
  - b. "What would happen if someone told you that he was getting hit and wanted it to stop?"
3. Disclosures with Strings Attached
  - a. "I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell."

### **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'm glad you told me."
3. Listen openly and calmly. Try to keep your own emotions and nonverbal cues neutral. Don't comment on the child's situation as being "good" or "bad". Let the child tell his or her own story.
4. Write down the facts and words as the child has stated them. Leave out your own assumptions and value judgments.