Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Defining Child Abuse and Neglect

According to Nevada State Law NRS 432B.020:

1. Abuse or neglect of a child mean: a) physical or mental injury of a non-accidental nature; b) sexual abuse or sexual exploitation; or c) negligent treatment as set forth in NRS 432B.140, of a child caused or allowed by a person responsible for his welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm.
2. A child is not abused or neglected, nor is his health or welfare harmed or threatened for the sole reason that his parent or guardian, in good faith, selects and depends upon non-medical remedial treatment of such child, if such treatment is recognized and permitted under the laws of this state in lieu of medical treatment. This subsection does not limit the court in ensuring that a child receives a medical examination and treatment pursuant to NRS 62.231.
3. As used in this section, “allow” means to do nothing to prevent or stop the abuse or neglect of a child in circumstances where the person knows or has reason to know that a child is abused or neglected.

Child maltreatment can be categorized and defined in one of four major areas: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. There are two indicators that abuse is taking place: physical and behavioral. Listed below are definitions of each type of abuse and the possible indicators:

1. Physical abuse is any act resulting in a non-accidental injury. It is the intentional, deliberate assault including, but is not limited to burning, cutting, twisting of limbs, poking, shaking, or excessive corporal punishment. In this case, non-accidental means an injury resulting from an event that a person responsible for the child could reasonably predict, even if the person did not intend to abuse or neglect the child. Some physical indicators of physical abuse may include unexplained:
   1. Bruises or welts
   2. Fractures
   3. Cuts scratches, or abrasions
   4. Burns

Some behavioral indicators of physical abuse may include:

* 1. Child is weary of adult contact
  2. Child is apprehensive when others cry
  3. Child exhibits emotional extremes
  4. Child is afraid to go home
  5. Child reports injury

1. Emotional abuse includes excessive verbal assaults on a continuous basis, such as: put downs, threats, sarcasm, screaming, blaming, or ignoring. Emotional or mental abuse includes injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity or the emotional condition of a child as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment of his ability to function within his normal range of performance or behavior.

Some physical indicators of emotional abuse may include:

* 1. Speech disorders
  2. Delays in physical development
  3. Failure to thrive

Some behavioral indicators of emotional abuse may include:

1. Sucking, biting, or rocking
2. Antisocial behavior
3. Developmental lags
4. Attempted suicide
5. Sexual abuse is sexual activity between a child and another person and usually includes an element of unequal power or coercion. Children, 16 years of age or younger, are not considered consenting participants. Sexual assault happens when one person uses threats or bribes to engage another person in sexual activity or when one person exploits the other. Exploitation occurs when individuals use a situation to their own advantage without regard for the other person. Sexual assault includes, but is not limited to: rape, oral sex, anal intercourse, incest, fondling, or obscene remarks. Sexual exploitation includes, but is not limited to: taking pornographic pictures or movies of minors, obscene phone calls, or inappropriate exposure of genitalia.

Some physical indicators of sexual abuse may include:

* 1. Difficulty walking or sitting
  2. Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
  3. Painful, itching, bruised, bleeding, or inflamed genital or anal areas
  4. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
  5. Pregnancy
  6. Unusual or foul odor

Some behavioral indicators of sexual abuse may include:

a. Withdrawal, fantasy, or infantile behavior

b. Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge

c. Delinquency or running away

d. Excessive masturbation

e. Report of sexual assault

1. Neglect is a lack of care or attention to a child by a parent or caregiver that endangers a child’s health or welfare, including failure to provide food, clothing or shelter. It can also include lack of medical care, education or supervision. It is considered negligence when the lack of care is due to the faults or habits of the person responsible for the child’s welfare or when those adults refuse to provide the care and attention and they are able to do so.

Some physical indicators of neglect may include:

* 1. Consistent hunger
  2. Poor hygiene or inappropriate dress
  3. Consistent lack of supervision
  4. Unattended physical problems or medical abandonment

Some behavioral indicators of neglect may include:

a. Begs or steals food

b. Stays at school for extended periods

c. Exhibits constant fatigue

d. Abuses alcohol or drugs

e. Delinquency

f. States there is no caregiver

Mandatory Reporting

Any person *can* make a report. Nevada Revised Statute 432B.220 requires that “reports must be made by the following persons who, in their professional or occupational capacities, know or have reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.

* A physician, dentist, dental hygienist, chiropractor, optometrist, podiatrist, medical examiner, resident intern, professional or practical nurse, physician’s assistant, psychiatrist, psychologist, marriage and family counselor, alcohol or drug abuse counselor, advanced emergency medical technician-ambulance or other person providing medical services licensed or certified in this state;
* Any personnel of a hospital or similar institution engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of persons or an administrator, manager or other person in charge of a hospital or similar institution upon notification of suspected abuse or neglect of a child by a member of the staff of a hospital;
* A coroner;
* A clergyman, practitioner of Christian Science or religious healer, unless he has acquired the knowledge of the abuse or neglect from the offender during a confession;
* A social worker and an administrator, teacher, librarian or counselor of a school;
* Any person who maintains or is employed by a facility or establishment that provides care for children, children’s camp or other public or private facility, institution or agency furnishing care to a child;
* Any person licensed to conduct a foster home;
* An officer or employee of a law enforcement agency or an adult or juvenile probation officer;
* An attorney, unless he has acquired the knowledge of the abuse or neglect from a client who is or may be accused of the abuse or neglect;
* Any person who maintains, is employed by or serves as a volunteer for an agency or service which advises persons regarding abuse or neglect of a child and refers them to persons and agencies where their requests and needs can be met.”

Any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has died as a result of abuse or neglect shall report this belief to the appropriate medical examiner or coroner.

According to NRS 432B.220, a child abuse or neglect report may be made verbally by telephone or otherwise. “The report must contain the following information if obtainable:

* The name, address, age and sex of the child
* The name and address of the child’s parents or other person responsible for his care
* The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the child
* Any evidence of previously known or suspected abuse or neglect of the child or the child’s siblings
* The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person making the report that the agency which provides protective services considers necessary.”

Always make the report, even if you have incomplete information.

Reports are to be made within 24 hours, according to NRS 432B.220, to the local office of the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services, to the county agency authorized by the juvenile court to receive such reports, or to any police department or sheriff’s office when there is reason to believe that a child under 18 years of age has been abused or neglected.

If you need to make a report, the following numbers can help determine the most appropriate agency to call:

* Washoe County Department of Social Services-775-785-8600
* Clark County Juvenile Court Services- 702-455-5200
* Reno Police Department- 775-334-2121
* Sparks Police Department- 775-353-2231
* Washoe County Sherriff’s Department- 775-785-4629
* WCSD School Police- 775-348-0285
* Child Abuse Hotline- 800-992-5757
* Crisis Call Center- 775-784-8090 or 800-273-8255

enCompass Academy Abuse and Neglect Reporting Protocol

Any child who participates in educational programs and activities conducted under the auspices of enCompass Academy is entitled to the protections of the law relating to child abuse and neglect reporting. All employees will complete training to recognize child abuse and neglect and to understand reporting protocol.

* 1. All enCompass Academy staff review Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect procedures yearly. In addition, enCompass Academy volunteers who work in programs involving youth receive protocols and procedures.
  2. In any case of suspected child abuse or neglect, all personnel, including volunteers, must comply with the law. The law states “where there is reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected a report must be made.” This includes an event that may have occurred in the past.
  3. Reports of suspected child abuse and neglect must be made within 24 hours of gaining knowledge of such information.
  4. Reports must be made directly to the appropriate agency (the local Nevada State Welfare Department Office and/or the local law enforcement agency where the alleged abuse occurred) by the person who has reason to believe or suspect that abuse or neglect has occurred.
  5. Reports can be made from the counselor’s office and the counselor is available for support.
  6. The supervisor/ principal is notified a report has been made.
  7. The report is kept in a secure location for the school counselor’s records and reference. This report is kept confidential.