

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION: A POLICY CHECKLIST FOR ANY ORGANIZATION THAT SERVES YOUNG PEOPLE

Kids are defenseless if adults don't take responsibility for preventing and addressing child sexual abuse. Does your organization have clear, written policies like the ones below? And are they consistently used?

- A. Is each potential staff member and volunteer screened through:
- Interviews that point out the organization's strict policies against situations that might lead to child sexual abuse? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Criminal background checks? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Personal references, each of whom is contacted before allowing potential staff members or volunteers to join the organization? YES NO NOT SURE
- B. Is each staff member and volunteer initially trained, tested, and then regularly given refresher training in:
- The extent and effects of child sexual abuse, the signs of possible abuse, and the circumstances in which abuse may occur? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Laws about child sexual abuse; organizational policies to address it; the reasons for these policies; and the disciplinary actions that are taken against anyone who violates laws or policies, or who permits, suggests, or fails to report violations? YES NO NOT SURE
- C. Is each staff member and volunteer absolutely prohibited from:
- Spending time alone with one child in situations that are not observable by others, or at least interruptible by others? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Allowing older or larger children or youth to spend time alone with younger children without at least one adult being present? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Engaging in or permitting inappropriate touching such as tickling, wrestling, physical horseplay, lap sitting, or frontal hugging, rather than more appropriate forms of touching such as high fives, fist bumps, side hugs, and pats on the shoulder? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Allowing a child to sit in the front seat of a vehicle, if it is ever necessary for a staff member or volunteer to transport a child without others being present in the vehicle? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Showing preference for one child over another through gift giving or other forms of favoritism? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Suggesting that children keep anything secret from their parents or caregivers, or any secrets from anyone about touching? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Having any form of outside contact with the children they work with, except for meetings where others are present, program-specific internet contacts through the organization's email system, or brief telephone or texting contacts for routine purposes such as scheduling? YES NO NOT SURE
 - Instructing or permitting another staff member or volunteer to violate any laws or organizational policies; or taking action against any other staff member or volunteer who reports a suspected policy violation to the organization's management, or who reports suspected child abuse to law enforcement or county social services? YES NO NOT SURE



D. Is each staff member and volunteer absolutely required to:

1. Directly and immediately report suspected child abuse to law enforcement or county social services, and also to anyone inside or outside of the organization who may be helpful in ensuring the child's safety? Remember: North Carolina law requires any adult to report suspected child abuse, regardless of the adult's relationship with the child (NCGS 7B-301). YES NO NOT SURE
2. Directly and immediately intervene to stop bullying, intimidation, hazing, emotional abuse, inappropriate touching, or sexual acting-out among children, or between children and staff members or volunteers? YES NO NOT SURE
3. Maintain confidentiality about children's medical or psychological conditions; the addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for children and caregivers; and information about possible policy and legal violations from those who don't have a need to know? YES NO NOT SURE

E. Does your organization include:

1. Specific staff members or volunteers who are responsible for maintaining written policies that address potential abuse, and who are also responsible for reinforcing compliance and correcting non-compliance? YES NO NOT SURE
2. A method to ensure an appropriate ratio of children to staff members or volunteers, with the ability to reduce the ratio if the children are relatively young, or if the staff members or volunteers are relatively inexperienced, or if the circumstances of a particular activity make it more difficult to monitor or control? YES NO NOT SURE
3. Communications with parents or other caregivers to keep them informed of their children's activities, progress, and problems; require their permission for any late-night, overnight, or off-site activities; encourage them to participate in activities, including stopping by at any time with or without notice; and provide them with information on how they can help to protect their children from sexual abuse? YES NO NOT SURE
4. Facilities and other physical environments that allow activities to be observable and interruptible (for example, half-doors, doors with windows in them, and doors that don't lock); and that allow the organization to control access by adults other than staff members or volunteers? YES NO NOT SURE

If you answered "Yes" to all 20 questions, congratulations! Your organization is serious about keeping kids safe from sexual abuse. Thank you!

If you answered "No, or Not Sure" to any of the questions, then you have an opportunity to help your organization be safer, and to help kids be better protected. Here's how:

- **Give this completed checklist to your supervisor, your program director, or your human resource manager. Make sure they know that at least one out of every ten children is sexually abused before age 18. In environments that don't have adequate safeguards, the proportion may be much higher. Ask how the organization can do better in preventing and responding to abuse. Ask how you can help!**
- **Call the TEDI BEAR Children's Advocacy Center at the Brody School of Medicine (252-744-8334) to learn about the Center's free training in sexual abuse recognition, response, and prevention. Schedule the training at your organization.**
- **Talk with the person who manages your organization's liability insurance, and suggest that they contact your insurance company about child sexual abuse prevention. Many insurance companies offer increased coverage or reduced premiums to organizations that commit themselves to keeping kids safer.**
- **For more detailed information about the best policies and practices from the federal Centers for Disease Control, go to www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/preventingchildabuse.html.**