

Abused And Neglected Children

Definition of Abuse & Acknowledgment of Mandated Reporter Status Form

As required by Illinois State Statute, recreation professionals are considered mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. As mandated reporters, it is essential to understand what constitutes abuse and neglect. The *Manual for Mandated Reporters* issued by the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services and the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILC5 5/1 et seq.) provide various guidelines and information regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect. For easier detection of child abuse and for the reporting of abuse, the following two areas are highlighted below:

Definition of abuse and neglect - What is abuse? What is neglect?

Physical Abuse as defined by the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA), (Sec.3) occurs when a parent or a person responsible for the child's welfare:

- “inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury, by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function”. Such common injuries include bruises, human bites, bone fractures, and burns.
- “creates a substantial risk of physical injury” likely to have the physical impacts listed above. Examples in DCFS allegation definitions include such incidents as choking or smothering a child, shaking or throwing a small child, and violently pushing or shoving a child into fixed objects. Other circumstances include incidents of domestic violence in which the child was threatened, violations of orders for the perpetrator to remain apart from the child, and a history of past sexual abuse which may place other children at risk.
- “acts of torture” which is defined by DCFS as “deliberately and/or systematically inflicting cruel or unusual treatment which results in physical or mental suffering”.
- “inflicts excessive corporal punishment” is included in ANCRA, but is not specifically further defined by DCFS. However, bruises inflicted on a child, especially a young child, are usually considered as meeting this definition.
- “commits or allows to be committed the offense of female genital mutilation”.
- “causes to be sold, transferred, distributed, or given to such child under 18 years of age, a controlled substance” (i.e. illegal drugs) except when prescribed by a physician.

Sexual abuse occurs when a person responsible for the child's welfare commits any of the following acts:

- sexually transmitted diseases are by DCFS definition “diseases which were acquired originally as a result of sexual penetration or conduct with an individual who was afflicted”.
- sexual penetration includes any contact between the sex organ of one person and the sex organ, mouth, or anus of another person. Typical acts include vaginal, oral and anal sex.
- sexual exploitation is defined by DCFS as “sexual use of a child for sexual arousal gratification, advantage, or profit”. This includes such acts as explicit verbal enticements, child pornography, self masturbation in the child’s presence, and forcing a child to watch sex acts.
- sexual molestation is defined by DCFS as “sexual conduct with a child when such contact, touching, or interaction is used for arousal or gratification of sexual needs or desires”. Examples include fondling a child or having the child touch the perpetrator sexually. (DCFS Procedures 300.Appendix B)

For both physical and sexual abuse, parents and caretakers are charged with the responsibility to take reasonable steps to stop abuse. If they do not, they may be charged with abuse themselves. (ANCRA Sec.3)

Neglect occurs when a person responsible for the child deprives or fails to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or needed medical treatment. Neglect is also alleged when an adult provides inadequate supervision of a child. This can occur when children are left either unsupervised or in the care of someone unable to supervise due to his/her condition. Children can suffer injuries that are the result of “blatant disregard” and are considered neglect. According to DCFS: “Blatant disregard is a situation in which the risk of harm to a child is so imminent and apparent that it is unlikely that any parent or caretaker would expose the child to such without taking precautionary measures to protect the child.” (DCFS Proc.300 App. B)

Note: Please review and execute the Acknowledgement of Mandated Reporter Status Form that follows.