

CREATIVE PRESCHOOL

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CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

The problem of child abuse and neglect constitutes one of the most severe challenges facing childcare providers today. Statistics reveal that at least one million children in the United States are severely abused annually. Thousands of these children die as a result of injuries sustained. In addition to this, it is estimated that millions more suffer less severe forms of abuse and neglect. All childcare providers are in a primary position to identify and protect those who may be victims of abuse and neglect. Creative Preschool staff will report any suspected child abuse or neglect situations to the proper authorities.

NEBRASKA LAW:

All states have enacted laws that define what constitutes child abuse and neglect and indicate the responsibility to report suspected instances of abuse and neglect to the appropriate child protection agency.

Nebraska statutes define "abuse" and "neglect" as follows:

Abuse or neglect shall mean knowingly, intentionally or negligently causing or permitting a minor child or an incompetent or disabled person to be: (a) placed in a situation that endangers his or her life or physical or mental health; (b) cruelly confined or cruelly punished; (c) deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care; (d) left unattended in a motor vehicle, if such minor child is six years of age or younger; (e) sexually abused; or (f) sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films or depictions.

This same state law mandates when any physician, medical institution, nurse, school employee, social worker or any other person has reasonable cause to believe that a child or an incompetent or disabled person has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes such person being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report to be made to the proper law enforcement agency or to the Department of Health & Human Services. Such report may be made orally by telephone with the caller giving his or her name and address and shall be followed by a written report, and to the extent available shall contain the address and the age of the abused or neglected person, the addresses of the person or persons having custody of the abused or neglected person, the nature and extent of the abuse and neglect, or the conditions and circumstances which would reasonably result in such abuse or neglect, any evidence or previous abuse or neglect including the nature and extent, and any other information which in the opinion of the person may be helpful in establishing the cause of such abuse and neglect and the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators.

This same state law goes on to quite clearly state that any person who willfully fails to make any report required by the above section shall be guilty of a Class III misdemeanor (maximum penalty 3 months in jail and/or a fine of \$500). In addition, it is important to note any person participating in an investigation, in the making of a report, or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from a report shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed except for maliciously false statement. All communications which normally would be considered privileged (e.g. teacher/student), will have such privilege waived if the sharing of such information is considered important as evidence regarding abuse and neglect.

If there is suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse or if the child is in immediate danger, law enforcement will immediately be contacted. In McCook, call 345-3450, to report concerns. In all cases of suspected child abuse/neglect the appropriate child protective services agency will be contacted. The Child/Adult Abuse/Neglect Hotline number is 800-652-1999.