



# **ANCS Mandated Reporting Inservice**

# Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse



O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 requires **all** employees and volunteers who work with children to report suspected abuse or neglect of children.

Must have **Reasonable cause** to believe that a child has been abused

**Immunity** from civil or criminal liability if the report of suspected child abuse is made in good faith

Guilty of a misdemeanor if any mandated reporter knowingly and willfully fails to report a case of suspected child abuse

# Five Types of Abuse



- Physical injury inflicted upon a child that is non-accidental
- Neglect or exploitation of a child
- Endangering a child
- Sexual abuse of a child
- Sexual exploitation of a child



# Indicators of Physical Abuse



- Bite marks
- Patterned bruises or bruises in the shape of items
- Welts
- Scratches
- Patterned and immersion burns
- Unexplained fractures/dislocations
- Bald spots on the scalp

# Indicators of Neglect



- Hoarding or begging for food
- Poor hygiene (unclean or unkempt)
- Inappropriate clothing for the weather
- Un-met medical, emotional, or mental health needs
  - \*Neglect is not an isolated incident. It is a pattern of unmet needs over a period of time. When considering suspected neglect, we should be sensitive that not all families have the same access or knowledge of resources.

# Neglect continued



- Inadequate supervision: Guidelines based on maturity of the child
  - Age 8 years and younger should never be left alone
  - Ages 9-12, based on maturity, may be left alone for brief periods (less than 2 hours)
  - Age 13 and older, based on maturity, may be left alone and may act as a babysitter for up to 12 hours

# Child Endangerment



**NEW 2017:** Expands what is defined as mandated child abuse reporting under OCGA 19-7-5 to include **endangering a child**

Child endangerment can include:

- When a person intentionally allows or has knowledge that a child under the age of 18 to witness the commission of a forcible felony, battery, or family violence battery
- any person who intentionally causes or permits a child to be present where any person is manufacturing methamphetamine
- driving under the influence with a child in the vehicle and
- prenatal abuse



# Indicators of Sexual Abuse



- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Play behavior with sexual overtones
- Advanced knowledge of sexual activity
- Sudden fear of people, places, or specific activities
- Sudden change in patterns of behavior or socialization



# Sexual Exploitation of Children



- Sexual activity involving a child in exchange for something of value, or promise thereof, to the child or another person or persons
  - ◆ Child treated as a commercial, sexual object
  - ◆ **INCLUDES:** street prostitution, pornography, erotic/nude massage, escort services, gang based prostitution, inter-familial pimping, internet based exploitation (pictures, videos, advertisements)

# Child Pornography



## HB 905: New Mandated Reporting Language

- Under the newly added statutory language **any individual, who acting in good faith, is in possession of unlawful images and materials of children (i.e. child pornography) to assist law enforcement or DFCS when the safety of a child is threatened by another individual will be given immunity from criminal liability** as long as the person turns the materials in and **reports to the police or another mandated reporter with 72 hours** of coming into possession of the images.
- This means if a student shares a nude picture with you, you must report it immediately.



- What to do if a child discloses abuse:
  - Stay Calm
  - Do not act visually upset or shaken; doing so may cause a child to backtrack or change story
  - Do NOT make any promises to the child, never promise to keep a secret
  - Do NOT contact parents
  - DO REPORT



# Procedures for Reporting Suspected Abuse



- Report any suspicion of abuse to the school counselor or administrator **immediately**.
  - Elementary Campus: Leslie Jo Tottenham or Lara Zelski
  - Middle Campus: Kristin Lee or Mark Sanders
- Keep all information about the child confidential (do **not** discuss the incident with other teachers, parents, or volunteers)

# Considerations for volunteers as you work with children



- Treat children with dignity and respect
- Maintain confidentiality
- Maintain appropriate boundaries within school and outside of school (including social networking)
- Avoid situations that can be misinterpreted as inappropriate



Thank you for your service to children!

If you have any questions about any of the information provided, please contact Ms. Tottenham, Ms. Lee, Ms. Zelski, or Mr. Sanders.

Please be sure that you have signed the form indicating that you have viewed this presentation and are aware of your legal responsibilities.