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<p>Ref #: 1302.47(b)(5)(i); 1302.47(b)(4)(i)(k); 1302.92(b)(2); 1302.90(b)(2)(ii) DCL 1240-04-01-10, ACF-IM-HS-15-04</p>	<p>Policy Council Approval Date: 07/25/2023</p>

COMPONENT: ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: PREVENTION, IDENTIFICATION, AND REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE: To develop a plan for responding to suspected or known child abuse whether it occurs inside or outside the program.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

Highland Rim Head Start is required by law to act as a child abuse and neglect reporting agency. All staff are required by Tennessee **law** to immediately, **without delay**, report any reasonable suspicion **that abuse or neglect has occurred or there is substantial risk that abuse or neglect may occur, either in the care of the Head Start agency or outside the program.** All staff will be trained on how to identify and report child abuse or neglect. Head Start staff will not intervene or investigate cases of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. Head Start staff will fully co-operate with all agencies involved in an investigation of child abuse or neglect, in an effort to provide protection for children enrolled in the program in the program.

Children will be supervised by two staff persons at all times. At no time will a staff person, volunteer, parent/guardian, etc. be left alone with a child.

All staff will be trained on how to prevent, identify, and report child abuse or neglect at a minimum of two times annually. Staff will sign off they have read and understand this policy after each training.

All staff will be trained annually on Active Supervision. All staff will utilize Active Supervision strategies to ensure no child is left unsupervised. See policy CHS-10 for further clarification on Active Supervision.

Head Start will provide annual orientation to parents/guardians concerning the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Parents/guardians will be provided information on the state approved personal safety curriculum, currently known as “Keeping Kids Safe.”

All centers/classrooms will have the number for reporting child abuse or neglect posted in a conspicuous place. To make a report:

For life-threatening emergencies, call 911
For non-emergencies situations, call 1-877-237-0004 or go to
<https://apps.tn.gov/carat/>

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family, but a closer look at the situation may be warranted when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination. Staff should also take cultural differences into consideration.

Visit the Department of Children's Services at tn.gov/dcs to learn more about keeping children safe.

When there are allegations regarding staff, reports should follow the program's chain of command. See Child Incident Reporting SOP. The Head Start Director is responsible for notifying the program's Regional Office immediately, without delay, when a staff member or volunteer causes an incident or suspected incident.

See Personnel Policies for further clarification regarding Employee misconduct.

Before employees are hired part of the background check process includes a Child Abuse and Neglect State Registry check. Monthly, a check process of the Child Abuse and Neglect State Registry will be completed on all staff, volunteers, and persons on the children's Emergency Pick-up list by the IT Coordinator.

Failure to comply with this policy and the severity of the incident will result in staff counseling, suspension without pay, or immediate termination.