

Policy number:	V-8	Subject:	CORPORAL PUNISHMENT / CHILD ABUSE REPORTING
		Revision:	one
Approved:	Agency Board:	June 28, 2006	
	Policy Council:	May 17, 2006	

POLICY

In summary, it is the policy of the agency to prohibit corporal punishment by all employees in the routine performance of their duties towards any enrollee; and to comply with appropriate laws governing child abuse and neglect. SVPDA must respond to suspected or known child abuse or sexual abuse whether it occurs inside or outside of the program. Each person within the agency must report child abuse and neglect in accordance with the provisions of applicable state or local law. Tennessee law requires reporting by individuals, although an agency may have a policy of "name of agency" reporting. This is designed for use when a series of incidents / reports / staff observations result in suspicion of neglect or abuse. It is infrequently required as citizens have a primary responsibility to report child abuse; name of agency reporting is applicable to severe neglect cases.

PROCEDURES

- A. Corporal punishment may include, but is not limited to: spankings, segregation or humiliation of any type; and exposure of any enrollee to physiological or psychological abuse, including shaking or threats.
- B. Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force as a discipline measure. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pulling of hair, etc. Isolation refers to separating the child from normal association with classroom activities as a punishment measure. Isolation includes, but is not limited to, confining the child in a small area, retaining the child in the classroom when other children go to play, or restricting the child from lunch with his/her classmates.

Physical punishment and total isolation are not consistent with the Head Start Performance Standards. These Standards define goals of increased social competence, establishment of patterns and expectations of success for the child, and the enhancement of dignity and self-worth within the child.

- C. The utilization of corporal punishment and total isolation of the child is not consistent with the Head Start Performance Standards and cannot be tolerated in Head Start Programs. Performance Standards prohibit the use of meals as punishment, thus isolation at meal times is forbidden.
- D. In the event an employee is found to be guilty of child abuse, he/she will be tentatively dismissed immediately and may face criminal charges. Staff who report abuse at a center are not subject to retaliation of any kind and are afforded "whistle-blower" protection.

- E. Staff will comply with Tennessee Laws pertaining to Child Abuse and Neglect, and will report all cases of suspected Child Abuse to one of the three agencies designated in Tennessee Code Annotated. In addition, suspected child abuse should also be reported to the appropriate coordinator or on-duty Program Director (Family & Community Partnerships Manager, Head Start Director or Nurse, or Program Administrator) who may facilitate initializing an official report in the name of the agency. Preparation of name of agency reporting does not relieve individuals of the responsibility to report. Individual staff may wish to verify that the report was forwarded promptly and appropriately. Although additional information may be required, no other direct call related to that incident may be required by law if name of agency reporting was completed
- F. Individuals in the agency will preserve the confidentiality of all records pertaining to child abuse or neglect in accordance with applicable state law.
- G. No one within the agency will undertake, on their own, to treat cases of child abuse and neglect.
- H. Each person in the agency will cooperate fully with child protective service agencies.
- I. SVPDA will make every effort to retain in the program children allegedly abused or neglected.
- J. The Family and Community Partnerships Manager (or the Head Start Director in his/her absence) is designated with responsibility for:
 - 1. Establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with the agencies providing child protective services in the community, and with any other agency to which child abuse and neglect must be reported under state law, including regular formal and informal communication with staff at levels of the agencies;
 - 2. Informing parents and staff of what state laws require in cases of child abuse and neglect;
 - 3. Knowing what community medical and social services are available for families in an abuse or neglect problem;
 - 4. Reporting instances of child abuse and neglect among Head Start children reportable under state law on behalf of the Head Start program;
 - 5. Discussing the report with the family if it appears desirable (preferable) or necessary to do so;
 - 6. Informing other staff regarding the process of identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.
- K. Training:
 - 1. SVPDA provides orientation and training, which fosters a helpful rather than a punitive attitude toward abusing or neglecting parents and other caretakers, for staff on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.
 - 2. SVPDA provides an orientation for parents, which fosters a helpful rather than

punitive attitude toward abusing or neglecting parents and other caretakers, on the need to prevent abuse and neglect and provide protections for abused and neglected children.