**Child Abuse and Neglect**

***The Law***

**WHAT IS PHYSICAL ABUSE?**

Physical Abuse means any physical, mental or threatened injury to a child by a person responsible for the child's care. The person responsible could be a parent or guardian, teacher, school administrator, daycare provider etc. The injury must not have occurred by accidental means or cannot be explained through the child's history of injuries.

**WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?**

Sexual abuse is when a child is allowed to become a victim of criminal sexual conduct by the parent, guardian or caretaker. It also occurs when the child is engaged in prostitution or pornography. Sexual abuse includes threatening to commit sexual abuse.

**WHAT IS NEGLECT?**

Neglect is the failure of a parent, guardian or caretaker to provide a child with adequate food, shelter, clothing, health care, supervision, and/or protection from an abuser. The result of this harms the child physically, mentally, or emotionally. If this occurs, the caretaker is guilty of neglecting a child. Neglect also included prenatal exposure to a controlled substance. This is determined by withdrawal symptoms in the child at birth, results of a toxicology test performed on the mother or child at birth, or developmental delays during the child's first year of life that would indicate prenatal exposure. Chronic and severe alcohol use by a parent or caretaker harming the child is also child neglect.

**WHAT IS ENDANGERMENT?**

Endangerment is when a parent, guardian or caretaker intentionally causes or permits a child to be in a situation that is likely to harm to the child's physical, mental, or emotional health or to cause the child's death. Allowing a child to be present where people are selling drugs or have drugs in their possession is also endangerment. In addition, if the child has access to firearms, the parent may also be guilty of endangerment.

**WHO CAN REPORT SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE?**

Any person can voluntarily report suspected cases of child abuse to child protection. Some professionals who work with children are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. These people are called Mandated Reporters. Mandated reporters are people who work in the following areas: health care, social services, mental health, childcare, and education.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A REPORT IS MADE?**

If someone suspects or has reason to believe that a child is being neglected or abused, they should make a report with the local child protection agency. Child protection is a social service agency that investigates reports of abuse and neglect, and provides services to the families. Once a report is made an investigation will take place. Recommendations will be made about the case based on the results of the investigation.

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***Questions***

**Write the definition for each form of abuse and give an example of each.**

1. Physical Abuse

2. Sexual Abuse

3. Neglect

4. Endangerment

5. What is the definition of a mandated reporter? Pretend that you are a teacher, social worker or a nurse. Give an example of a situation that might occur where you would be required to make a report to child protection.

6. What happens once a report is made to child protection?

**Child Abuse and Neglect*Activity: Matching***

**Match the following vocabulary words to their correct definitions.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Physical Abuse \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Mandated Reporters

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Sexual Abuse \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Child Protection

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Neglect \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Endangerment

A. A social service agency that investigates reports of abuse and neglect, and provides services to the families.

B. When a parent, legal guardian or caretaker willfully deprives a child of necessary food, clothing, shelter, health care, supervision and protection from an abuser. This deprivation harms or is likely to harm the child's physical, mental or emotional health.

C. Any physical, mental or threatened injury to a child by a person responsible for the child's care.

D. When a parent, legal guardian, or caretaker intentionally or recklessly causes or permits a child to be in a situation likely to substantially harm the child's physical, mental, or emotional health or cause the child's death.

E. When a child is allowed to become a victim of criminal sexual conduct by the parent, guardian or caretaker. It also occurs when the child is engaged in prostitution or pornography.

F. Professionals who work with children and are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

**Child Abuse and Neglect**

***Activity: You Decide***

Read each of the following situations. You must decide whether the parents are guilty of Neglect, Endangerment, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse or if the situation was the result of an accident.

**N** for **Neglect**, **E** for **Endangerment**, **P** for **Physical Abuse**,

**S** for **Sexual Abuse**  **X** if injury was **due to an accident**.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_1. Amy's mother is in the kitchen fixing dinner. Amy is three years old and beginning to explore her surroundings. She sees something up on a shelf and decides she wants it. She starts to climb up on the furniture so she can get the object. She tries to stand on the couch, loses her balance and falls to the floor, hitting her head on the side of the table.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2. Marcus, who is eight, is climbing on the jungle gym at a playground. He falls and cuts open his head. He has a slight concussion and the wound requires stitches.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_3. Jonathan and his friend are playing indoors because it is raining outside. They have been watching westerns on television. After the show ends they decide to reenact the TV show. They start to dress up and then get an idea to use a real gun instead of pretend guns. They find a loaded gun under a mattress. As they play, the gun goes off and hits Jonathan in the arm.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_4. Rebecca is taking care of her nieces and nephews while her sister runs some errands. It is really hot, so she decides to let the kids play in the wading pool in the backyard. She tells them to wait for her while she runs upstairs to get some towels. The kids go outside anyway. Elaina, who is three, gets into the wading pool. She accidentally slips and falls face down. Rebecca runs out and tries to revive Elaina, but it is too late. Elaina dies.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_5. Adam, a seven-year-old is riding his bike in front of the house. He knows he isn't supposed to cross the busy street down the block, but he is bored and figures that his mother will never find out. He waits until the stoplight turns green and starts to cross the street. A truck runs the red light and hits Adam. He is thrown from the bike and has suffered serious injuries.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_6. Alisha is four months pregnant. She is using alcohol and drugs and appears to be out of control. Her friends have told her teacher that they are worried about both Alisha and the baby.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_7. Carrie's lives with her dad, who is an alcoholic. He is unemployed and drinks all day. Since Carrie's mother is dead, Carrie is responsible for all of the housekeeping activities, including making meals. Carrie had an activity after school and was late coming home, which meant that her chores were not done and her father’s dinner would be late. She tried to sneak in, but he was there waiting for her. She tried to explain, but he started hitting and threatening her.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_8. Janine is 16 years old. She has always done whatever she wants. Her mother says that she cannot control her. Janine has been in trouble with the law on several occasions, but has just received probation. It is a Friday night and Janine and her friends are at her house getting high. They decide to take her mother’s car and ride around. None of them has a license or insurance. Janine's mother tells them that she wishes they would stay home, but does nothing to stop them. In fact she gives her daughter the car keys. They leave. Soon the police arrive at Janine's house and tell the mother that her daughter was critically injured in a car accident that was the result of a high-speed chase.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_9. Robin is home with her two children. Two-year-old Deshawn is taking a nap. Robin decides to give Rashida, her 8-month-old daughter a bath. She has her in the bathtub, when she remembers that she left a cigarette burning in the living room. She leaves the bathroom to put out the cigarette. In the meantime, her son wakes up so she stops to pick him up. When she returns to the bathroom, Rashida is face down in the tub and is not breathing.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_10. Patricia is a single mother of two children under the age of five. She is a drug addict and is having difficulty coping with her children and her life. She begins using drugs daily as a way to escape and cope. The house is filthy, and the children are pretty much on their own. There is little food in the house. They are sickly and dirty. Patricia comes and goes without regard to her children. The neighbors are concerned about the children and call the police.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_11. Jessica's home life has been pretty chaotic lately. She has thought of running away, but doesn't know where to go. Her father has been seeing someone other than her mother. Jessica walked in on them one afternoon. Ever since, her father has been threatening to beat her if she ever breathes a word of this to her mother. Jessica is afraid her mother will find out and her father will blame her. She doesn't know where to turn.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_12. Precious lives with her mother and her mother’s boyfriend. They are always drinking and getting high. When Precious turned 14 she started to get high with them. She started missing school. As a result a social worker dropped in on them one afternoon. Everyone was high. Precious and her mother stated that the woman had no right to come to their house and that Precious didn't have to go to school if she didn't want to. The social worker referred the case to child protection.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_13. Roxanne's baby, Andrew has been sick. He cries all the time. Roxanne has been having problems with her boyfriend and is very upset. She knows that Andrew is sick, but doesn't know what to do. She feels ready to burst. Finally, she calms Andrew down and he falls asleep. A few minutes later, the phone rings. It is her boyfriend yelling at her. Andrew starts crying again. She throws the phone and goes into the bedroom. Her anger has overtaken her. She starts hitting her baby.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_14. Jane and her baby are at her baby's dad’s house. He and his family are into the drug scene. There is a lot of activity in the house. As a result the cops have been watching the house for a long time. They come in with a search warrant and arrest the major players. They talk with Jane and determine that the baby is in need of protection. They take the baby.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_15. Judy is staying with her aunt and uncle for the weekend. She really likes her aunt, but is uneasy around her uncle. Her aunt leaves to pick up some groceries. Judy goes up to her room so she doesn't have to be around her uncle. A few minutes later her uncle comes in and sits on the edge of her bed. He says that he has noticed she is starting to develop into a young lady. He touches her breasts. Judy is scared, but lets him continue. They hear the door slam downstairs and her uncle quietly leaves her room.