**CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICY**

**Rev. 7/11/2018**

All of our staff have responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center.

1. Definition: Child Abuse includes: -Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)

 -Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)

 -Neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)

-Emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child’s psychological growth)

-At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

1. Child Abuse is defined as:

A child who has had

-Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him

- injuries which are at variance with the history given of them

- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment

1. Staff responsibilities should they witness, or become aware of, abuse or neglect of a child enrolled facility: As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report any suspicion that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.
2. Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

- Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800- 842-2288.

- Call the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood at 1-800-282-6063 or 1-860-509- 8045.

- The reporter’s name is required, but may be kept confidential. - Information needed:

 - Name of child

- Address of child

- Phone number of child

- Name of parents or guardians

- Address of parents or guardians

- Phone number of parents or guardians

- Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect - Exact description of what the reporter has observed

- Time and date of incident - Information about previous injuries, if any

- Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse - Name of any person suspected of causing injury

- Any information reporter believes would be helpful

- Any action taken to help or treat the child - Seek medical attention for the child

– if needed Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF. Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e). All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

1. The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child. The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program. Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF’s investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.
2. Staff Training: Staff will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings, held in September and February, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.
3. Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy: A copy of this policy will be included in our parent information packet, and each family will be given a copy upon enrollment. A copy of this policy will also be posted on the parent board. When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child’s parents to access the cause of the child’s injuries and offer support and guidance.