



**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**YOUTH & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

*Issued by CLC Congregational Council*

*November 12, 2017*

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## **I. PREVENTING ABUSE OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

### **A. MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Christ Lutheran Church (“CLC”) is to be the body of Christ in word and deed for West Cobb. CLC is a diverse community of disciples continually deepening our relationships with Jesus Christ by knowing, growing, and going. In keeping with this mission, CLC seeks to provide an environment for Youth and Children that is safe from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The Youth and Child Protection Policy (“YPP”) and related insurance coverages should be reviewed on annual basis and updated as needed. No policy can address every situation – good judgment and common sense should be utilized. When questions or issues arise under this policy, contact the CLC pastor or Vice-President of Church Council for further advice and guidance. Monitoring the implementation and ongoing effectiveness of the policy is the responsibility of the CLC Mutual Ministry Committee.

### **B. TWO ADULT RULE AND HOSPITALITY POLICY**

There will always be two adult supervisors, 21 years of age or older. (when supervising youth ages 17-18, volunteers shall be a minimum of 5 years older) present when caring for minor children/youth (ages 0-18 years of age) under the auspices of CLC. If two adults are not present, every reasonable effort should be made to find another adult trained in the CLC Youth and Child Protection Policy. If not, all doors should be left open and a floating volunteer should be used to help supervise the area. A couple in a committed relationship may not independently lead youth activities unless another adult is present.

A new member of CLC may not serve as volunteer with children or youth until they have maintained an active membership at CLC for a period of six (6) months, and subsequently completed required training or serve with two other volunteers, or until such training is completed. Visitors may only volunteer with Education Committee Chair approval and must be accompanied by a YPP (including Safe Gatherings) trained CLC staff member or volunteer.

### **C. APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

In keeping with our mission, CLC seeks to provide a Christian environment where safe boundaries are established so children can thrive and flourish. Adult caretakers are to be models of Christ's love as they relate to minors. Everyone is a child of God and as such, should be treated with respect.

The following appropriate behaviors are expected from all adults at all times in relating to minors when working or volunteering for the church:

- Maintain safe and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries by avoiding prohibited behavior.

- Listen carefully to children and show interest in what they have to say.
- Pray that our children may grow in faith in God and respect for each other and creation.
- Be fair and consistent.
- Have a sense of humor, be flexible and giving, enjoy the children, and smile often.
- Focus on positive behaviors and praise the child when for that behavior is demonstrated.
- Set clear limits that can be managed by adults and understood by children.
- Use appropriate, positive, steps when discipline is needed and focus on the behavior, not the child.

#### D. PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

- The following behaviors, particularly those defined by the law of the State of Georgia ([GA Code § 19-15-1 \(2016\)](#)) are prohibited for all paid employees and volunteers of CLC.
- **Corporal Punishment** - use of physical force to discipline a child.
- **Isolation Punishment** - placing a child in an enclosed area alone for the primary purpose of disciplining the child.
- **Physical abuse** - any physical injury inflicted by an adult on a child by other than accidental means.
- **Sexual abuse** - a person's employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor to engage in any sexual act as defined by the law of the State of Georgia ([GA Code § 19-15-1 \(2016\)](#)).
- **Sexual exploitation** - conducted by a child's parent or caretaker that allows, permits, encourages or requires that a child engage in prostitution or child pornography.
- **Inappropriate touching or fondling of a sexual nature** by any adult of a minor ([GA Code § 19-15-1 \(2016\)](#)).
- **Bullying behaviors in any form** between youth, between children, between youth and children, and between adults and youth and adults and children.

#### E. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

##### Mandated Reporters

The law of the State of Georgia requires that certain individuals (licensed social workers, licensed physicians, etc.) who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made as provided by law. CLC directs all mandated reporters to comply with the requirements of the law.

##### Non-mandated Reporters

CLC directs all of its paid personnel and volunteers, whether mandatory reporters or not, to report to the CLC pastor (or if the CLC pastor is accused, to the CLC council vice president, and then to CLC council president) their knowledge or belief of the abuse of minors when that knowledge is obtained

while engaging in the ministries of CLC.

### Reporting Alleged Violations

All paid personnel and volunteers of CLC are to report alleged violations of Prohibited behaviors to the staff person associated with their ministry. That staff person shall report to the CLC pastor (or if the CLC pastor is accused, to the CLC Council Vice President, and then to CLC council president). All such reports shall be made within twenty-four (24) hours of being notified of the incident and in compliance with the laws of the State of Georgia.

### Reporting Alleged Violations to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (“ELCA”)

The CLC pastor or his/her designate shall report all alleged violations to the Southeastern Synod office of the ELCA when the alleged violator is a member of the clergy or associate in ministry.

## **F. ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

- All paid CLC staff members and all volunteers in children/youth work shall receive training as part of the Safe Gatherings screening process. Safe Gatherings screening is effective for 3 years.
- It shall be the responsibility of the CLC pastor to make sure that each new CLC staff member has completed training before engaging in any activity with the children or youth of CLC, and that each staff member annually participates in training.
- It shall be the responsibility of the CLC staff member in charge of each area of children’s and youth ministry to make sure that all volunteers have completed training before engaging in any activity with the children or youth of CLC.
- CLC’s YPP policy should be discussed as part of CLC’s New Member class, and be the topic of the adult Sunday School hour at least annually.
- Additional resources include the child safety quiz in the appendix of this policy, and material on the Southeastern Synod of the ELCA’s youth ministry web site ([sesyouth.org](http://sesyouth.org)).

## **G. CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES WHEN CLC FACILITIES ARE USED BY THIRD PARTIES**

If a third party is leasing any CLC facility for activities specifically involving children or for activities where the third party is providing childcare, the third party must agree to abide by CLC’s Youth and Child Protection Policy.

The third party shall provide CLC with a certificate of insurance no later than (5) days prior to the activity, and shall name CLC as an additional insured.

If there are any doubts or concerns about the nature of the activity to be conducted by the third party, the CLC council vice president should contact the CLC insurance carrier for guidance in determining

whether the proposed activity should be permitted and if additional insurance coverage may be required.

## **H. INSURANCE/RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

For information on CLC's current insurance coverage, contact a member of the Property Committee of the CLC church council.

Youth activities considered unduly hazardous (such as water skiing, snow skiing, caving, zip lining, etc.), shall not be authorized until an CLC staff member has cleared the activity with CLC insurance carrier and obtained a certificate of insurance. In the event that an accident does occur which results in a claim but CLC insurance carrier was not notified prior to the occurrence of the activity, CLC insurance carrier has indicated they will cover the claim, but may consider cancelling CLC's policy thereafter.

It is the responsibility of the CLC staff member in charge of each area of the children's and youth ministries to obtain parental consent and medical authorization forms as needed. These forms should be placed on file with the CLC insurance carrier. Parental consent forms and medical authorization forms should be specific for the event and not "blanket" in nature. *Permission slips should stay with whoever leads the program, and copies should be maintained at CLC.*

## **II. REPORTING & DOCUMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

### **A. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING ALLEGATIONS**

1. Treat all complaints seriously, even if ultimately proven false.
2. Parents of the victim should be notified immediately of the allegation, whenever possible.
3. Document the complaint as expediently as possible from the time of receiving the notice of the complaint (normally within 24 hours.). See Appendix 3 for documentation template.
4. Two designated adults (typically the pastor and the staff person for the age group in question) should do all of the interviewing of the victim.
5. Whenever an investigation is undertaken, the President of the CLC Council shall be notified of the complaint without revealing names of those involved.
6. Guard confidentiality of complaint and of investigation as much as possible. Emphasize the confidentiality of the investigation to each person who is interviewed, and instruct him or her not to disclose any information regarding the complaint or investigation to anyone.
7. Make detailed written notes of each complaint and file with other confidential church documents, such as payroll information. The complaint file should be retained for six (6) years or per CLC's insurance requirements. The notes should document persons present, date, time, location and details of the conversation. Ask interviewee to review the notes and sign that they are accurate.
8. Put the accused on notice that they will not be permitted to volunteer with youth and children at CLC until the allegation has been investigated.
9. Notify Cobb County Department of Family and Children's Services ("DFACS") immediately if the reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred.

Cobb County DFCS  
325 Fairground Street, SE  
Marietta, Georgia 30060-2355  
(770) 528-5000  
FAX (770) 528-5154

### **B. INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS WHEN THE PERPETRATOR CONFESSES**

1. Report the matter to the Cobb County DFACS. (see contact information above)
2. Immediately remove the individual from any volunteer or paid position involving contact with minors. Follow the recommendations for "Responding to the victim and the victim's family".
3. Contact the CLC insurance carrier
4. Consider retaining legal counsel.
5. Contact Southeastern Synod of the ELCA.

## **C. INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS WHEN THE PERPETRATOR DOES NOT CONFESS**

### **1. Interview the alleged victim in the presence of his or her parents**

- a. Assure the victim and the victim's parents that the church takes very seriously any allegations of sexual or physical misconduct and will not tolerate any sexual or physical abuse.
- b. Explain the documentation process used.
- c. Explain the issues involved in the victim's right to anonymity. The report can be anonymous but the victim does not have that right.

### **2. Interviewing the accused abuser**

- a. Inform the accused of the nature of the complaint. Advise the accused that the church will report the allegation of sexual or physical abuse according to Georgia law and that they should use their own judgment in seeking legal counsel.

### **3. Interview the Supervisor of the accused (if any).**

- a. Summarize the allegations against the accused. Ask questions regarding knowledge of allegations (past & present), action taken by supervisor, possible motives, and if screening procedures and policies were followed.
- b. When the record of the conversation is complete, ask the supervisor to sign a statement that the account is accurate, if they are so willing. They are not required to do so.

### **4. Resolution of the charge if reasonable cause exists.**

- a. Report the matter to Cobb County DCFS. Report should be made by one of the interviewers.
- b. Consult with the church's attorney and follow personnel policy when the accused is a paid staff person.
- c. The CLC MMC and/or church council shall in reasonable judgment determine whether the congregation should be informed. Congregational meetings are the preferred method of communication. Allow only active, adult, confirmed members of the congregation to be present, read a written statement, which follows the above guidelines and has been reviewed by legal counsel. Do not attempt to answer questions or make comments and have legal counsel present. If communication is to be by letter, send it only to active, adult confirmed members and mark the letter and envelope "Privileged and Confidential." State only facts that can be established as true. Have the letter reviewed by CLC legal counsel before it is sent.

**5. Resolution of the charge if evidence is inconclusive.**

- a. Discuss the case, either in person or by phone, with DFACS. If the report is made by phone it should be done over phone that records the conversation. Inform the authorities that the conversation is being recorded. After completing the report, transcribe the conversation so that a written record is kept. Include the name and position of the person contacted. If the report is made in person, both investigators should be present and prepare and sign a detailed written memorandum of the conversation including the details of the conversation, and the name and position of the person contacted.

**6. Responding to the victim and the victim's family.**

- a. Church leaders should contact the victim and the victim's family to express concern and make the services of the church available to them. If the victim's family requests assistance with any medical needs or desires counseling, CLC may offer financial assistance to hire or retain a professional counselor for the victim, state in writing the parameters of the counseling, including the name of the counselor, how many sessions, and the maximum dollar cost to be provided by the congregation. Any such arrangements should be reported to CLC's insurance company.

**7. Responding to the media.**

- a. Refer all media inquiries to the CLC pastor or council president.
- b. All responses should be cleared by CLC legal counsel and should emphasize the church's concern for victim and the extensive steps the congregation has taken to reduce the risk of child abuse and to provide a safe environment for youth and children. Describe all the precautions taken and the policies implemented. Be proactive and positive about CLC's approach to child abuse.

### **III. SCREENING PROCESS FOR HIRING STAFF & VOLUNTEERS**

#### **A. HIRING CLC STAFF**

All applicants for employment at CLC must be screened pursuant to CLC's employment policies and procedures.

#### **B. SCREENING VOLUNTEERS FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN MINISTRY**

Individuals wishing to volunteer to work with children or youth at CLC, are required to complete Safe Gatherings screening and background check program. They will also complete the Safe Gatherings on-line child safety-training program. The CLC pastor will notify an individual who fails the background check. All volunteers, even those previously approved by Safe Gatherings, shall be required to reapply for approval on an annual basis.

## **IV. POLICY FOR STAFF TO MEET WITH INDIVIDUAL YOUTH**

### **A. INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH YOUTH**

1. Whenever possible all meetings with youth will occur at the church; however, no meetings will take place at the church unless other adults are present in the building at that time.
2. If a meeting cannot be held at the church office, the youth will be met at the youth's home with parent or guardian present (preferred), or at a public location with parental permission.
3. In meeting with youth, CLC staff will work to assure youth safety and should not agree to keep secrets, which would otherwise endanger or place the youth in harm's way.
4. If meeting without another adult present is unavoidable, CLC staff should inform another CLC staff member and the youth's parents.
5. If a conversation happens digitally more than one adult should be on the conversation thread. CLC employees shall never use digital conversations that self-delete (ie Snapchat). If a conversation happens one on one a record of the conversation shall be made by the CLC employee.

## V. YOUTH OVERNIGHT TRIP POLICY

Activities where staff members/volunteers taking young people out of the area for longer than a day are to be pre-approved by the church staff to ensure proper supervision by CLC staff members or volunteers.

1. In no circumstances may one adult be allowed to take youth on an overnight outing by themselves.
2. A proposed itinerary must be submitted to the CLC pastor prior to any overnight activity. In the case where the pastor plans the trip, the itinerary should be submitted to the council vice-president and Christian Education committee chair.
3. Each youth on the trip have a signed permission form.
4. All persons are to abide by the CLC Child & Youth Protection Policy. An adult/youth ratio of 1:5 for middle school students and 1:7 for high school students shall be ensured by the staff/leaders in charge.
5. All overnight activities must have at least two non-spousal adult leaders who are supervising activities. If the group is coeducational, there must be at least one male and one female, to accompany the group.
6. Separate sleeping quarters for male and female participants will be provided and will be enforced.
7. Each sleeping area will be supervised by at least one staff member or volunteer. The facilities and nature of the trip will dictate the method of supervision.
8. None of the children/youth will be allowed away from the designated overnight area without prior permission of the group leader and signed permission from the parents.
9. No individual child/youth is to be left alone in a room except the restroom.
10. No two children/youth of the opposite sex are to be left unsupervised.
11. Children/youth of the opposite sexes will not be allowed to sleep in the same room.
12. No adult shall share a room with a child unless the adult is the child's parent.
13. Adult chaperones are expected to participate as fully as possible with youth in all activities on retreats.
14. At least two (2) adult chaperones shall stay with youth until all youth are picked up from the church or appointed meeting place.
15. In the event a parent does not arrive to pick up their child, the staff member or volunteer should call the parent and give them a choice to either pick up their child or have them taken home by the staff member or volunteer.
16. In the event youth are attending an event hosted by another organization, CLC staff should make effort to comply with CLC's Youth and Child Protection Policy. If that is not possible, parents should be notified so that they can determine if they still wish their child to attend the event.



## **VI. NURSERY POLICY**

1. Never leave any child unattended at any time.
2. The top section of the nursery door shall remain open at all times.
3. Children must always be signed in and signed out. Be sure the person who checks the child in is the one who checks the child out. Do not permit anyone else to pick up a child unless the parent dropping the child off indicates that someone else will pick the child up.
4. Wash hands before beginning work in the nursery, before handling snacks, after wiping children's noses, after helping children in the bathroom, and after changing diapers.
5. If the child is under the age of 2, the bathroom door should be left open.
6. Other than parents, only paid staff members may change diapers in the church nursery.
7. Wear disposable gloves (which are provided) when changing diapers. To dispose of gloves and diapers place them in a small plastic bag, use a twist tie to close the bag, and place the bag in the trash basket.
8. Do not allow interchanging of bottles, pacifiers, cups or snacks.
9. Change sheets on beds after each use. Place used sheets near sink to be washed and returned to the church.
10. Youth volunteers must be members of CLC and in Grades 6 - 12. (Youth will be scheduled as needed.)
11. A Nursery Volunteer shall contact parents in the following circumstances:
  - If the child becomes ill
  - If the child is injured
  - If the child cannot be calmed and/or is disturbing other children.
12. In the event of an accident, the staff member shall complete an accident form and submit it to the CLC Pastor.
13. Any child displaying one or more of the following symptoms will NOT be admitted to the nursery:
  - Runny nose with thick or green discharge

- Persistent cough
- Conjunctivitis (“Pink Eye”)
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Please consider the child’s welfare, the other families and the staff and keep sick children at home.

## VII. DRIVING FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN EVENTS

1. Christ Lutheran Church will pay gas and meal expenses for adult chaperones on youth events.
2. ALL drivers must:
  - a. Be 21 years of age or older.
  - b. Have completed the Safe Gatherings Screening Program.
  - c. Have a valid driver's license, a copy of which shall be placed on file with the Pastor during the trip.
  - d. Not have had a DUI in the past 3 years.
  - e. Not have had more than one speeding ticket in the past 3 years;
  - f. Obey the laws of the road to the best of their ability.
  - g. Ensure that each passenger wears a seat belt when the vehicle is in motion.
  - h. Provide proof of insurance.
3. If a situation requires a staff member or volunteer to be alone in a vehicle with youth, every effort shall be made to notify the parent.
4. All vehicles used for transporting youth shall have adequate liability and medical payments coverage.
5. Siblings may transport siblings.

### DRIVER'S STATEMENT:

I have read all of the above policies and agree to comply with them.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

In event of a driver emergency, provide name and phone number of emergency contact:

\_\_\_\_\_

### **EVENT INFORMATION**

Event and Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time Leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time Returning \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a copy of the insurance form

## VIII. FIRST AID POLICY

1. The CLC First Aid policy provides the necessary equipment, training and other facilities needed for basic medical treatment, and makes sure that a process is available to seek additional assistance.
2. CLC will provide the following first aid equipment:
  - a. First Aid kits will be maintained in the church kitchen, nursery, and Holt House
  - b. Travel First Aid kits will be made available for youth activities off premises
  - c. One defibrillator is located in the Fellowship hallway near the Pastor's office
3. CLC staff and volunteers working with children and youth will be given annual first aid training (suggest using a nurse volunteer or Red Cross resources during a blood drive). For all youth events outside of normal church hours and on any field trips or overnight functions, a certified First Aid responder must be present.
4. CLC will keep and distribute to all staff and volunteers a list of certified first aid responders (nurses, doctors, Scout leaders, teachers, Red Cross, etc.) who can be engaged if an incident occurs. Copies of the list should be maintained near the first aid kits (kitchen area, office, etc.)
5. All incidents requiring first aid will be reported to the child's parents, the pastor and if necessary, the church insurance provider. The pastor will provide a report of any Incidents at the monthly council meetings.
6. **Medical Emergencies:** A medical emergency is defined as a medical situation that is severe in nature requiring immediate medical attention. In the case of a medical emergency - such as, but not limited to – cuts, falls, possible broken bones, etc.:
  - a. The staff will administer the appropriate first aid. The child should not be moved unless absolutely necessary.
  - b. If there is any doubt about the medical condition of the child, the staff should immediately call 911 and the child's parents.
  - c. Even if the situation is not perceived as critical, the staff should contact the child's parents.



**Medical Insurance Information:**

Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Group #: \_\_\_\_\_

ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Care Physician:

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**In case of emergency please call:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

***In the event parent cannot be reached***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2 – YOUTH AND CHILD SAFETY QUIZ AND ANSWER KEY

### RECOGNIZING, REPORTING AND PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE QUIZ

Mark each statement “T” for True or “F” for False

- \_\_\_ 1. Neglect is the most commonly reported form of child abuse.
- \_\_\_ 2. Child abuse and neglect is preventable.
- \_\_\_ 3. Some physical discipline is child abuse.
- \_\_\_ 4. Abuse may be directed toward only one child in the family.
- \_\_\_ 5. Bruises on the elbows, knees, shins or forehead are likely to be accidental in a toddler.
- \_\_\_ 6. Abused children usually will discuss the abuse.
- \_\_\_ 7. You must be certain that abuse or neglect has occurred before you report it.
- \_\_\_ 8. Building protective factors in children and families increases the likelihood of preventing child abuse and neglect.
- \_\_\_ 9. If you report abuse or neglect and your suspicions are unfounded, you are liable for a civil or criminal suit.
- \_\_\_ 10. An anonymous report of abuse and neglect will not be investigated.
- \_\_\_ 11. A child *never* will enjoy sexual touch.
- \_\_\_ 12. To prevent child abuse we must hire more child protection workers and build more treatment facilities for children who have been abused.
- \_\_\_ 13. By educating a child about sexual abuse, you may cause the child to become sexually active.
- \_\_\_ 14. Emotional abuse can be an isolated incident.
- \_\_\_ 15. Early reporting is encouraged so that the child may be removed from the home of an abusive parent or caretaker.
- \_\_\_ 16. Abusive parents do not love their children.

\_\_\_ 17. In Georgia, an adult who assaults his/her partner in the presence of children can be charged with cruelty to children.

\_\_\_ 18. Leaving a child under the age of 12 at home alone is considered child abuse.

\_\_\_ 19. The work of preventing child abuse is best accomplished by the professionals.

## **RECOGNIZING, REPORTING AND PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE**

### **1. True**

Each year, neglect represents 80% of all substantiated child abuse cases.

### **2. True**

With individual family and community support, child abuse and neglect can be prevented.

### **3. False**

Physical discipline becomes child abuse when a parent / caregiver inflicts injuries to a child ranging from cuts, bruises, broken bones, burns, bites and in some cases death. Child Protective Services policies do not restrict a parent / caregiver from disciplining a child. These policies define “discipline” as “teaching and training a child to follow rules.” It further recognizes limit-setting that is developmentally appropriate, in addition to structured and positive reinforcements that help children develop self-control, self-reliance and respect for others as important goals of discipline.

### **4. True**

In some instances, one child in a family will be seen as "special" by the parent / caregiver. This child may require extra care because of a disability or may be labeled as “different” or “difficult.” Such children can be singled out for abuse by a parent / caregiver. On the other hand, neglectful situations tend to involve all children in a family.

### **5. True**

The presence of bruises or cuts on a child does not necessarily mean that a child has been abused. Preschoolers are at an age where they constantly explore their environments. This type of exploration is critical to healthy brain development and learning. Bumps and bruises on the elbows, knees, shins or forehead are common injuries as these children learn balance and coordination. Explanation of injuries should always be noted in light of the child's ability to cause such an injury. Bruises on the back, thigh, buttocks, face or back of the legs are less likely to be accidental. Injuries to an infant are suspect.

### **6. False**

To an abused child, the fear of the unknown may be much more frightening than the abuse itself. Children who are abused may still be extremely loyal to the abuser and will try to hide their injuries in an attempt to protect their parent / caretaker. The child also may feel that the punishment was deserved or be fearful that the parent / caretaker will be punished and removed from the home if the

abuse is discovered. Fear of severe punishment or breakup of the family unit may also prevent the reporting of abuse. Many children simply do not believe that anyone will listen to or believe them if they tell.

## **7. False**

Georgia Law states that a report should be made if you have "reasonable cause to believe" that abuse or neglect is occurring - this means if you suspect abuse or neglect. Physical proof or other evidence is not required. Determining whether abuse or neglect is actually occurring is the legally mandated responsibility of child protective services.

## **8. True**

Risk factors increase the likelihood of negative outcomes occurring. Protective factors are those characteristics that "buffer" individuals or families from stress or other negative influences and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes occurring. It is best to focus simultaneously on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors.

## **9. False**

Although no statute can forbid the filing of civil or criminal charges, Georgia law protects the reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect from any decision or award that might be sought. Under Georgia code, any person participating in the making of a "**good faith**" report of suspected child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability. Further, the identity of those who report child abuse is confidential.

## **10. False**

The child protective services agency is required by law to investigate every report of suspected child abuse and neglect that it receives. Although anonymous reports are permitted, they are not encouraged. People who report are asked to give their names so that they may be contacted at a later date if additional information is needed. Under Georgia Law the identity of the reporter is confidential and will not be used or divulged during the investigation. The circumstances and details of the abuse may lead an abuser to guess the source of the report.

## **11. False**

Many people find it difficult to comprehend that a child may feel pleasurable sensations from sexual touch. Children are physiological beings and may respond to sexual stimulation. Sexuality, which is different from sex, is an inherent characteristic of the human body that is present at birth. Sexual abuse often starts out as appropriate expressions of affection (hugs, kisses etc.) and overtime

progresses to sexual exploitation. The child may feel special in the early stages of this "grooming" process, only to become increasingly uncomfortable, anxious or scared by the attention. Many children who are being sexually abused may blame themselves, have feelings of guilt, and believe that no one would believe if they told. Also, the perpetrator may have threatened harm to the child, a parent, or something or someone the child cares about to assure the child's silence and secrecy of the sexual abuse.

## **12. False**

It is too late to prevent a child from being abused once the abuse has already happened. Therapeutic services can be helpful to the child in resolving the abuse issues and teaching skills to prevent future victimization. However, to truly protect children from child abuse and neglect in the first place, we must teach them a range of personal safety skills appropriate for their age, including the ability to identify supportive adults inside and outside of the family that they can turn to for help.

## **13. False**

While it is the responsibility of adults to protect children from abuse and neglect, it is important to arm children with information and teach them skills to keep safe. Just as we teach our children how to cross a street or respond in emergencies, we must teach them to protect themselves from unwanted touches and other personal safety dangers. It is very important that the information we share with children be developmentally appropriate and understandable to the child.

## **14. False**

Emotional abuse is caused by a pattern of negative parental behaviors and interactions with a child over time and is not usually caused by a single incident. It is important to know that there are underlying emotional implications inherent to all other forms of abuse.

## **15. False**

Early reporting to child protective services is encouraged to prevent or minimize injury or harm to a child. If abuse or neglect is occurring, child protective services may work with the family to alleviate or correct those factors contributing to its occurrence. Children are removed from the home only when sufficient protection cannot be provided to guarantee their continued safety within the home environment.

## **16. False**

Many parents abuse their children because they do not understand stages of child development, may act in anger, or may have poor coping skills. This does not mean they do not love their children, but that they need to learn appropriate behaviors to show love and properly discipline their children.

**17. True**

Under Georgia Law, a person who commits an act of domestic violence in the presence of a child can be prosecuted for cruelty to children. Violence in the home creates an environment of fear and anxiety that can be emotionally damaging to the children. Adults who abuse their partner may also abuse children in the home. Also, a child can be accidentally injured during an altercation between adults in the home.

**18. False**

According to DFCS policy, children eight years or younger should not be left alone. Children between the ages of nine years and 12 years, based on level of maturity, may be left alone for brief (less than two hours) periods of time. Children 13 and older, who are at an adequate level of maturity, may be left alone and may perform the role of babysitter, as authorized by the parent, for up to 12 hours.

**19. False**

The prevention of child abuse is everybody's job. Professionals, parents and concerned citizens in the private and public sector must all play a role in stopping child abuse before it happens. Your local child abuse prevention agency can provide concrete information for child abuse prevention at the community and individual level.

## APPENDIX 3 – CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE OF CONCERN

Individual(s) of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Concern:

\_\_\_\_\_ Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth

\_\_\_\_\_ Policy violation with a child or youth

\_\_\_\_\_ Possible risk of abuse

\_\_\_\_\_ Other concern:

Describe the situation: Attach additional sheets if needed.

What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified?

If reported to the State, what was their recommendation about investigating?

Has this situation ever occurred previously?

What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called?

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation?

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Location and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Once completed, please fax to the confidential fax line xxx-xxx-xxxx.*