

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF ABUSE

Established: October 2018

Revised:

RATIONALE

Carstairs Playschool Society is committed to fostering a caring, safe and respectful atmosphere for our clients. Any abusive behavior on the part of employees, volunteers, students, other persons providing services, clients, family members and visitors will not be tolerated or condoned.

Carstairs Playschool Society, as a service provider, is required by Alberta Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA), Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Service to prevent and report abuse of clients.

DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse:

Child abuse, as defined by the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act and where child intervention services may become involved, is any act of maltreatment of a child by a parent or guardian that results in injury or harm. Child abuse by someone other than a parent or guardian must be reported to the police.

The four main types of abuse as:

- neglect
- emotional injury
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse

Each situation and family are different so, while some of the signs might point to abuse, they might also mean that the family is facing other problems which may contribute to child abuse such as:

- a lack of parenting skills
- immature parents
- parents with negative childhood experiences
- social isolation
- alcohol and/or drug use in the home
- manufacture of drugs, indoor marijuana grow operations, drug trafficking, or other forms of illegal drug activity in the home
- family violence in the home
- frequent family crisis
- unrealistic expectations of a child's behaviour and capacities

POLICY

Children depend on others for their safety and well-being and have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Carstairs Playschool Society employees and persons engaged for services are responsible for keeping clients safe from abuse. They must be aware of and comply with provisions of the *Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Service*.

1. Awareness and Prevention

- i. In compliance with Alberta Child Care Licensing Act and Regulation, Carstairs Playschool Society will require a criminal record check for employees and Board of Director volunteers.
- ii. A copy of the *Protocols for Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Services* will be made available to employees, volunteers, families and visitors.
- iii. Appropriate training, supervision and coaching will be provided on the prevention and management of abuse and the provisions of the *Protocols of Handling Child Abuse and Neglect in Child Care Services*.
- iv. Staff will be responsible for assessing and documenting potential aggression and implementing appropriate interventions.

2. Reporting

- i. Anyone who believes there is or has been abuse involving a child must report that abuse as soon as reasonably possible. If a client's safety is in immediate danger, call the police.
- ii. There are three options for reporting abuse:
 - Southern Alberta Child Intervention Services at 1-800-638-0715
 - Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5437
 - Report to police service if the abuse is criminal in nature.
- iii. Alberta Child Care Licensing must be notified of any reports made.
- iv. Under Protection for Persons in Care Act, individuals who fail to report abuse, or who make a false or malicious report of abuse may be guilty of an offence and fined up to \$10,000.00

3. Response to Allegations of Abuse

- i. The priority response in the event of any allegation of abuse is to ensure assessment and management of physical injuries and psychological well-being of the individuals affected.
- ii. Carstairs Playschool Society will not take adverse action such as dismissing an employee or discontinuing services to a client because they reported abuse, helped with an investigation or were subject to abuse. Employees who make a report maliciously or without reasonable and probable grounds will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- iii. Alberta Child Care Licensing will be notified of any accusations.
- iv. Internal investigation by Carstairs Playschool Society will be conducted in a prompt, objective, confidential manner and appropriate follow-up action will be taken.

PROCEDURE

1. External Investigation

- 1.1. The Carstairs Playschool Society allows investigators to enter the premises at any reasonable hour with the permission of the person in charge or with a court order, if necessary. Investigators may:
 - Interview the client or any person who can provide any information relevant to the investigation.
 - Access all records that could be relevant to the investigation that are under the custody and control of the service provider or any other person, including records containing personal information, health information or financial information, for the purpose of inspecting them, making copies of them or taking extracts from them. Require the production for examination of any equipment and temporarily remove the equipment for the purpose of examining or testing. Photograph or otherwise record anything in the premises that the investigator considers would be of assistance.
- 1.2. Compliance with the decision is required by law and will be monitored.
- 1.3. A copy of the report/decision will be provided to the complainant, client or his/her legal representative, the service provider and the individual involved.

2. Internal Investigation

- 2.1. Upon receiving a report of alleged abuse, the Chairperson, Office Manager or designate will ensure Alberta Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) and Alberta Childcare Licensing have been notified and will initiate an immediate investigation.
- 2.2. If the alleged abuser is an employee, the Manager may institute a decision-making leave prior to or during an investigation. If the alleged aggressor is a volunteer, visitor or service provider, supervision or limitation of access to the client and /or facility may be necessary during the investigation. If the alleged abuser is a client, safety measures will be considered and implemented as necessary during the investigation.
- 2.3. If the internal investigation determines that abuse or inappropriate conduct has occurred; outcomes may vary depending on the severity of the incident and identity of the abuser. Possible outcomes are:
 - 2.7.1. Employees
 - Disciplinary action up to and including termination.
 - Possible involvement of police or legal action.
 - 2.7.2. Volunteers and Others Engaged for Service
 - Possible termination of volunteer arrangement or service provider contract.
 - Possible police involvement or legal action.

2.7.3. Family Member/Visitor

- Restricted or supervised visiting.
- Possible police involvement or legal action.