

**NORTHWEST COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.**  
**PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**REVISED AND UPDATED Effective April 15, 2021**

**CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

Northwest Community Action, Inc: Head Start follows Federal laws, Minnesota Statutes, and Head Start rules governing the reporting of maltreatment of minors. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect as defined under Minnesota Statute 626.556. NWCA also directs strong efforts toward the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Head Start is not or is not to become a primary instrument for the treatment of child abuse and neglect.

NWCA staff must report all suspected or alleged incidents of child abuse and neglect. This is accomplished in the following manner:

1. The individual staff member who suspects child abuse and/or neglect has the responsibility for reporting the case immediately. This includes all staff employed by preschool programs.
2. An oral report of the suspected child abuse/neglect will be made to the local Social Service office or police department. A follow-up written report will be requested by that agency.
3. An oral report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours to the designated person at the Head Start Central Office. The oral report must be followed by a written report which will be kept in a confidential file at the Head Start Office.
4. A staff member designated by the Director will be responsible for maintaining the file and discussing the suspected child abuse/neglect case with the reporter whenever necessary.
5. The report must include the following:
  - a. Child's name,
  - b. Child's address,
  - c. Child's birth date,
  - d. Child's sex,
  - e. Parent/Guardian's name, address, and telephone number,
  - f. The nature and extent of injuries and/or evidence of neglect or molestation,
  - g. Name(s) and address(es) of person(s) suspected of child abuse/neglect,
  - h. Indication as to whether the parent/guardian was notified that a report was being made,
  - i. Name, address, and telephone number of the Head Start program and staff member reporting, and
  - j. The time, date, and person to whom the report was made. It is imperative to use clear, concise, and objective reporting techniques.

Failure to report suspected child abuse/neglect is a misdemeanor under Minnesota Statute 626.556, Subdivision 6. Minnesota Statute 626.556, Subdivision 4 also provides that, "Any person ...participating in good faith and exercising due care in the making of a report...shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that otherwise might result by reason of his action." Individual reporting suspected child abuse/neglect shall be disclosed only by the local welfare agency upon court order if the report is substantiated.

Head Start may inform the parent/guardian that a report has been made. This may be discussed with the Director and/or staff member responsible for the NWCA Head Start Child Abuse and Neglect Policy.