

CHILD PROTECTION AND REPORTING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY

The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) requires all licensed professionals and paraprofessionals to report suspected child abuse and or neglect. As designated “mandated reporters,” FirstSteps employees have a legal obligation to advise local government agencies if they suspect child abuse or neglect.

A “mandated reporter” may be any of the following:

- A teacher
- An instructional aide
- A teacher’s aide or teacher’s assistant employed by any public or private school
- A classified employee of any public school
- Paraprofessionals working with children with special needs

CANRA requires that any professional or paraprofessional who has knowledge of or observes a child, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect shall report such suspected incident to a designated agency. The report must be made immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and followed up with a written report within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

Mandated reporters may submit reports of suspected child abuse or neglect to any of the following local government agencies:

- Police department
- Sheriff’s department
- County probation department (if designated by the county to receive mandated reports)
- County welfare department
- Department of Child Services

No mandated reporter who reports a suspected incident of child abuse or neglect shall be held civilly or criminally liable for any report required or authorized by CANRA.

Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child’s physical or emotional health and development. Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature. Examples include:

- Physical abuse – any non-accidental injury to a child. This includes hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, burning, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping and paddling.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual act between an adult and child. This includes fondling, penetration, intercourse, exploitation, pornography, exhibitionism, child prostitution group sex, oral sex, or forced observation of sexual acts.

- Neglect – failure to provide for a child's physical needs. This includes lack of supervision, inappropriate housing or shelter, inadequate provision of food, inappropriate clothing for season or weather, abandonment, denial of medical care, and inadequate hygiene.
- Emotional abuse – Any attitude or behavior that interferes with a child's mental health or social development. This includes yelling, screaming, name-calling, shaming, negative comparisons to others, telling them they are “bad, no good, worthless” or “a mistake.” It also includes the failure to provide the affection and support necessary for the development of a child's emotional, social, physical and intellectual well-being. This includes ignoring, lack of appropriate physical affection (hugs), withdrawal of attention, lack of praise, and lack of positive reinforcement.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect:

- I. Immediately contact the child's Program Director, Regional Clinic Director, or Executive Director.
 - If the incident has occurred during non-business hours and you are unable to contact a clinical staff member at FirstSteps, you **MUST** report the incident directly to the proper authorities.
 - ChildHelp USA is a national child abuse hotline that is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Their number is (800) 422-4453 or (800) 4-A-CHILD.
 - It is important to document all aspects of the situation or incident. Your FirstSteps Program Director will require you to come into the office and will assist you in appropriately documenting your written report for the authorities and for the patient's file. If you haven't yet verbally reported the suspected abuse, your FirstSteps Director will be available to assist you in calling and properly reporting to the authorities.

MISSING CHILD REPORTING POLICY

FirstSteps employees are required to follow state education codes designed to protect the children we serve. As an employee at FirstSteps, you have a duty to report missing or suspected missing children per California Education Code 49370 which states the following: *the Legislature hereby declares its intent in enacting this article to require that specified persons, including school teachers, school administrators, school aides, school playground workers, and school bus drivers, report missing children to a law enforcement agency in a timely manner, in order to provide those children a necessary level of protection when they are at serious risk.*

If you suspect a child is missing:

- I. Immediately contact the child's Parent/Guardian.
 - Immediately contact the child's Program Director, Regional Clinical Director, or Executive Director.
 - If the incident has occurred during non-business hours and you are unable to contact a clinical staff member at FirstSteps, you **MUST** report it directly to the proper authorities. In the case of a missing child, call the nearest law enforcement agency.
 - It is important to document all aspects of the situation. Your Program Director will require you to come into the office and will assist you in appropriately documenting your report for the authorities and for the patient's file.

- Your statements may be crucial to properly investigating a missing child. Please remain at the office until you have been interviewed by law enforcement.
- Ensure that you are reachable by phone by authorities until otherwise notified.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE REPORTING POLICY

FirstSteps employees are required to report domestic violence or suspected domestic violence occurring in the homes of our patients. Employees who suspect domestic violence must report it to the patient's Program Director immediately. The Program Director is responsible for working with the Regional Clinic Director to report the incident of domestic violence or suspected domestic violence to proper authorities immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and followed up with a written report within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

If you suspect domestic violence in the patient's home:

- I. Immediately contact the child's Program Director, Regional Clinical Director, or Executive Director
 - If the incident has occurred during non-business hours and you are unable to contact a clinical staff member at FirstSteps, you **MUST** report it directly to the proper authorities. In the case of domestic violence, call the nearest law enforcement agency.
 - i. You may need to include the following information in the report:
 1. The name of the injured person if known;
 2. The injured person's whereabouts;
 3. The character and extent of the person's injuries;
 4. The identity of the person who allegedly inflicted the injury.
 - It is important to document all aspects of the situation. Your Program Director will require you to come into the office and will assist you in appropriately documenting your report for the authorities and for the patient's file.
 - Your statements may be crucial to properly investigating a case of domestic violence. Please remain at the office until you have been interviewed by law enforcement.
 - Ensure that you are reachable by phone until otherwise notified Conf.

By signing this Child Protection and Reporting and Domestic Violence Policy, I am aware that, as an employee at FirstSteps, I am considered a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse and neglect and a mandated reporter of suspected missing child. I understand that I am responsible for reporting any child abuse or suspected child abuse/neglect, missing or suspected missing child, or domestic violence or suspected domestic violence to the proper authorities. I have been provided information regarding reporting laws and procedures, and agree to uphold the laws pertaining to the prompt reporting of such incidences.

Employee's Signature

Date

Employee's Name (Print)