

# Child Protection Policy Training – RSLC

June 2021

## What Puts Children At Risk For Child Abuse/Neglect?

Although children are not responsible for the harm inflicted upon them, certain factors have been found to increase their risk of being abused or neglected. These Risk Factors could include:

- Caregivers with AOD issues
- Caregivers with mental health issues
- Caregivers who don't understand children's needs or development
- Caregivers who were abused/neglected as children
- Caregivers who are experiencing high levels of parenting stress and economic stress

We can buffer the effects of those risks with Protective Factors – one factor is adults who create safe, positive relationships with children and help provide emotional support.

## What Are The Types Of Abuse And What Do I Look For?

- Physical Abuse: Keep an eye out for unexplained injuries or burns, bruises, dislocations, bites; unlikely excuses for injuries; fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched.
- Emotional Abuse: Extreme fear of new situations, displays a lack of self-worth, and overreaction to mistakes might be observed.
- Sexual Abuse: We might see a lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way - inappropriate to the child's age, being isolated or withdrawn.
- Neglect: We might observe frequent hunger, poor hygiene, constant tiredness, untreated medical problems.

## How Do I Talk With A Child Who's Reporting Abuse?

- Stay calm and be reassuring
- Find a quiet place to talk
- Believe what is being told to you
- Listen, but do not press the child for information
- Say that you are glad that the child told you
- Say that you will do your best to protect and support the child
- Stress that abuse is not the child's fault
- Seek reporting guidance from church staff

## How Can I Be A Good Role Model For Kids?

A Protective Factor for children could include being a positive role model for them. Examples might be:

- Being unflappable in chaos, perhaps when a child is out of control or misbehaving; don't demean them
- Being an encourager
- Being ready to apologize for our mistakes

In addition, positive adult/child interactions might include:

- Giving full attention to the child
- Getting down on the child's level
- Reflecting or repeating back what he/she is saying and what he/she may be feeling to make sure you understand (Counseling 101)
- Talking with children – not at them
- Modeling social skills (not interrupting, saying “please” and “thank you”)
- Using descriptive praise
- Displaying appropriate affection

## Appropriate Affection Towards Kids Looks Like What?

Keep in mind the personal space of children. We can still touch, but be careful! So, what can we do? Let's talk!!!

## What About Adults, Kids and Social Media?

- While most posts are probably harmless, others have the potential for harm.
- Consider all posts to be public posts.
- The info posted will probably still be around for many years to come.
- Remember, we're creating a digital footprint the first time we upload a picture of a child on the internet.

## Anything Else?

Someone once said that our society would be a better place to live if – instead of asking, “How are you?”, we greeted one another with, “How are the children?” Agree!!